

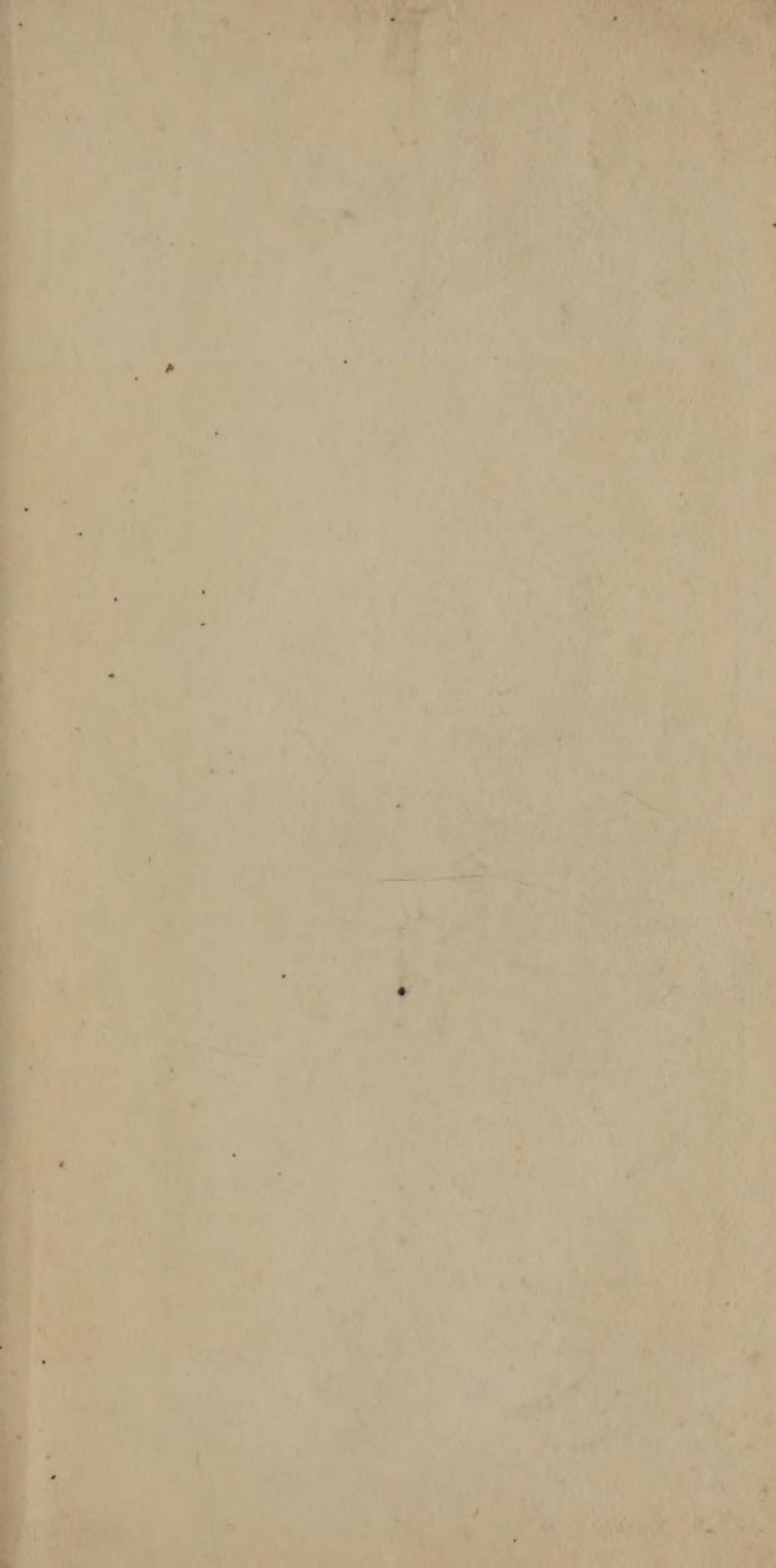
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LESSON HANDBOOK

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*A Concise Treatment of the International Sunday School Lessons for the Entire Year
Based on the Text of the*

AMERICAN STANDARD
VERSION

WITH MAPS

*By HENRY H. MEYER, A.M., B.D.
With an Introduction by
ROBERT W. ROGERS, Ph.D., LL.D., F.R.G.S.*

BEREAN SERIES

JOHN T. McFARLAND, D.D.
EDITOR

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CALENDAR FOR 1907.

JUNE.	MAY.	APRIL.	MARCH.	FEB'Y.	JAN'Y.	1907.
SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THUR.	FRI.	SAT.
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DEC'R.	NOV'R.	OCT'R.	SEPT'R.	AUGUST.	JULY.	1907.
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And, so, in the process of the sun, the Sunday school lessons have come back to the Old Testament again, and indeed, to the most interesting part of the Old Testament. The small boy will have his chance again, he will have Joseph—and the story of Joseph is still the world's best story for a boy.

There is no reason to deny that the New Testament must ever remain of supreme importance to the Christian, for in it is adequately presented the person of our Lord, whom Old Testament prophets and seers saw but dimly at the best. Nevertheless, the Old Testament possesses an undying interest for all sorts of people who would know God's will and understand the way of his revealing. Some day we shall get the Old Testament better taught than it is now, taught with a fullness of knowledge, with a glow of enthusiasm, with a passion of love now almost undreamt of among us. When that glorious day arrives we shall bring up a generation of Christians who will not fly into a paroxysm of passionate despair when some new discovery or new method of study sets the Bible in a new light.

In these new lessons, in this new year of grace lies the opportunity for some teacher to learn the Old Testament over again, to see its exhaustless beauty, to feel its mighty and unsurpassable yearning after righteousness, to discern its incomparable revelation of the only God, the universal Father, the Saviour of the sin-cursed souls of men. The teacher who will teach these lessons just as he did last time has missed his privilege

as well as failed in his duty. Did he love the Old Testament and teach it with affection when last these lessons were in his hand? It is well, but there is a call for more love now than then. He has a better Old Testament now than he had then. In the providence of Him who gave us the Old Testament, much light from manifold studies has come to God's word since last these lessons were taught. The teacher must begin his work not with fear of this new light, but with a glad embracing of its priceless value. Not that all the new words spoken concerning the Bible are true; I know too well the streams of worthless theorizing to say that. But the newer views that have been sifted by many thoughtful and earnest scholars and have stood the test of those who know the Lord in a personal experience, these must we learn to accept and use with gladness. It is not a sane conservatism, but a spiritual sloth that keeps the many echoing outworn formulas. The Old Testament has suffered not one iota from all that has been said and done in its study during the past fifty years. It has suffered much from its unwise and slothful defenders who would block the wheels of a reasonable progress, take it out of the world of thought and consign it to a shadowed cloister.

In the midst of all this debate, what is God's humble servant to do? Here is my counsel to him. Let him first of all make sure of his own righteousness of life, for that is the primary message of the Old Testament, and no man who is not seeking it has any chance of knowing what the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob has to say in the oracles of Israel. In the next

place let him make sure of his own personal experience of our Lord, and pray for the Spirit which he promised. That man will be perfectly safe no matter what happens now or hereafter in Old Testament research. With righteousness of life, Christian experience and the Holy Spirit's guidance he is ready to learn. But mark this word, he is *ready* to learn. God puts no premium on laziness. . The man must study, work, toil night and day to learn this priceless Old Testament. It will not do for him to sit with his Bible on his knee and expect it to penetrate his sluggish consciousness. God does not work that way.

And now here is the place to begin. Here is a little book written with adequate knowledge, with fine feeling, with deep conscientiousness, with the fear of God. I have read it with interest, with surprise that so much should have been compressed in so small a compass, with admiration for its freshness and its inspirational quality. Many may and do differ upon some of these difficult questions, but here is a most useful introduction to their study. May God bless it as it goes upon its mission of instruction.

ROBERT W. ROGERS

Drew Theological Seminary.

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1. Dictionary of the Bible, Hastings.
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5. Introduction to the Old Testament, McFadyen.
6. The World Before Abraham, Mitchell.
7. Beginnings of Hebrew History, Kent.
8. Bible History, Koenig.
9. The Codes of Hammurabi and Moses, Davies.
10. Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge, Worcester.
11. The Book of Genesis, Driver.
12. Genesis, Gunkel.
13. Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers:
 - Lange's Commentary
 - The Pulpit Commentary
 - The Expositor's Bible
 - Whedon's Commentary
14. Numbers: The International Critical Commentary, Gray.
15. Deuteronomy: The International Critical Commentary, Driver.
16. Deuteronomium, Bertholet.
17. Joshua, Judges:
 - Lange's Commentary
 - The Pulpit Commentary
 - The Cambridge Bible
18. Richter, Ruth, die Bücher Samuelis, Nowack.
19. Samuel, The International Critical Commentary Smith.
20. Samuel, Budde.
21. Die Bücher Samuels, Thenius—Löhr.
22. The Christian Faith, Curtis.

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H. H. M.

P R E F A C E

THE LESSON HANDBOOK FOR 1907 is not unlike its predecessors of other years in the general plan of treatment of the separate lessons. In its preparation, however, somewhat more attention has been given to the quarterly *Previews* and *Reviews* and to the *general supplementary matter* preceding and following the lessons proper. The number of *maps* has been doubled and the *Subject Index* greatly enlarged and improved. The text of the *American Standard Version* has been adopted for the first time. All the changes made we believe to be in the line of progress and improvement. In the treatment of the separate Old Testament lessons we have borne in mind the distinctly religious purpose for which the early historians of the Hebrew people wrote, and have sought, first of all, to discover the moral and religious lesson contained in each historic period or narrative studied. Problems of historical or textual criticism the solution of which would materially aid in correctly understanding and rightly appreciating the records of this earliest period of Jewish history have been given such consideration as the unavoidable space limitations set for us in this volume have permitted.

No feature essential to an understanding of the lesson passage, its setting and context, or the application of its most important practical teachings to life has been consciously omitted. The compactness of the commentary should not lead anyone to underestimate the scope and fullness of the lesson treatment which it really offers.

THE LESSON HANDBOOK is intended for adult Bible students, that is, for pastors, teachers and senior Sunday school pupils.

THE AUTHOR.

New York, August, 1906.

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THE LESSON HANDBOOK

FIRST QUARTER

THE CREATION, FALL AND FLOOD; THE PATERNALS FROM NOAH TO JACOB

Preview: Genesis—Its Purpose and Content

The book of Genesis gets its name from the Greek word meaning *origin* or *source*. It is a book of origins or beginnings. In measured and dignified language it introduces the story of Israel's origin and growth as a nation by the story of creation, thereby suggesting at once the far-reaching purpose and world-wide mission of this peculiar and favored people. Man's plan and task in the world; his tragic disobedience and rapid degeneration; the destruction, after ten generations, of the human race, with the exception of one righteous household; God's new covenant with Noah after the flood, in which the sacredness of human life is emphasized; the blessing of Shem, the ancestor of the Semites, from whom sprang the Hebrew race—these events, presented in brief pictorial language, form the universal background against which the story of the Hebrew nation is thrown. This history we shall follow in the lessons for the first quarter, from the call of Abraham to the familiar story of Jacob and Esau. Our studies in the book of Genesis will continue into the second quarter.

The whole book of Genesis is dominated by a deep religious spirit, and by a remarkable sense of the reality of God, his interest in the world, and more especially in man created in his own image, his abhorrence for sin, and his purpose to redeem. The moral level on which the narrative of Genesis stands is marvelously high. Its heroes are humble, conscious of the fact that they are "not worthy of the least of all the loving-kindnesses" of Jehovah. The book emphasizes the value of implicit trust in God (15. 6), protests strongly against human sacrifice (chap. 22), and makes the fear of God the strengthening and sustaining power of youth in the hour of terrible temptation (39. 9).

LESSON I.—January 6

GOD THE CREATOR.—Gen. 1. 1-25

Read John 1. 1-5. Memorize verses 1-3.

1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2. And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of Jan. 6]

God moved upon the face of the waters. 3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. 6. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8. And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. 9. And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. 10. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. 11. And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. 12. And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. 13. And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. 14. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16. And God made the two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also. 17. And God set them in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth. 18. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. 19. And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. 20. And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21. And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that moveth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind: and God saw that it was good. 22. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth. 23. And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

Golden Text.—In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.—Gen. 1. 1.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*T.* God the Creator, Gen. 1. 1-13. *W.* God the Creator, Gen. 1. 14-25. *Th.* Made in wisdom, Psa. 104. 1-24. *F.* The mighty word, Psa. 33. 1-12. *S.* Almighty Creator, Isa. 40. 18-31. *S.* Praise to the Creator, Psa. 148.

Introduction: In the Beginning

The beginnings of the human race and of the world, of course, date back to a time many centuries, probably ages, before the invention of writing. The ultimate source, therefore, of any written account of these events must necessarily be the oral traditions handed down through many generations prior to the time when they were committed to writing. But such early traditions must be carefully distinguished from fables, and also from legends and myths in the commonly accepted meaning of fictitious narratives. Tradition is not necessarily fiction; it may be all fact. Every ancient people has its early traditions which antedate its recorded history. So also the Hebrew people. And not until we recognize these early narratives in Genesis for what they are, "popular Semitic traditions of an illimitable past, given an eternally true and beautiful setting by men truly inspired by God," will we be able correctly to understand and rightly appreciate their meaning.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. God—*Elohim*, the ordinary Hebrew word for God, other names used in the Old Testament being: *El*, common to several languages, including the Assyrian and Phoenician; *El Shaddai*, rendered conventionally by "God Almighty"; *Yahweh*, the personal name of the God of the Hebrews, and several poetical titles. "*Elohim*" is plural in form, though used with a singular verb. It is clearly intended to refer to a singular Deity, and is explained as a "plural of majesty," used to express dignity or greatness. **Created**—Lit., *fashioned by cutting, shaped*. **2. Waste and void**—*Chaos*, in which nothing can be distinguished or defined. **The deep**—The undivided watery mass, conceived of by the writer as enveloping the chaotic earth. **4. Good**—Corresponding to the divine intention. **7. The Firmament**—Lit., something *beaten out, pressed firm*, the ancient Hebrew conception being that a solid partition separated the waters above the earth from those on its surface, dividing **the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament**. **8. Heaven**—The blue sky was conceived of as forming the inner or under surface of this solid partition or firmament. **11. And God said**—A single word of divine command. **And it was so**—In this oft-repeated statement lies the profound religious significance of the entire chapter. (Comp. "Application," below.) **17. Set them in the firmament**—That is, in some way fastened them to this solid firmament which in the thought of the writer formed the vaulted dome of the sky above. **20. In the open firmament**—Lit., *On the face of the expanse of the heavens*, or "in front of the (solid) firmament of heaven."

We note that, while this whole description of creation, scientifically considered, reflects the notions of a primitive people rather than the conclusions of scientific inquiry, yet, considered from the religious standpoint, it is,

beyond comparison superior to the polytheistic beliefs of other ancient peoples which represented the heavenly bodies as themselves divine and worthy to be feared and worshiped. To the profounder significance of our lesson narrative we turn our attention in the next paragraph.

Application: The Eternal Problem

I. The Problem Stated.—All nations that are sufficiently civilized to have attained the art of writing have endeavored in some way to account for the beginnings of all things that are. The question of the *whence* and the *whither* of the visible, tangible world about him, and of his own being, is the eternal problem which man in every age of the world has earnestly sought to solve. This problem assumes a *twofold aspect* and permits of a *twofold answer*: 1. In its *scientific aspect* it demands an explanation of natural phenomena and of human life on the basis of natural causes and effects, and challenges eternally the advancing intellectual capability of man. 2. In its *religious aspect* it is more simple, personal, and practical, touching the inner spiritual life and challenging the faith of man.

II. The Answer of Genesis.—It is eminently proper that the Book of God's Revelation to Man should take for its departure the eternal problem of creation considered in its personal, religious aspect. Considered in this aspect the answer of Genesis to our problem is *complete, true, final*. That answer is that, 1. There is but one God, "one supreme Master of life, whom nature did not make, but who made nature." 2. This Supreme Being is good, as is also everything made by him in its essential nature and purpose. 3. He made man, the end and goal of creation, in his own image. (Comp. Introduction to Lesson II.) In unequalled simplicity and sublimity the author of Genesis sets forth every one of these essential truths. He not only reveals God to us, but places God, nature, and man in their proper relations. Therein lies the true inspiration of Genesis.

For Further Discussion

Can there ever be any real conflict between truth revealed by science and religious truth? Wherein lies all apparent conflict between the two?

LESSON II.—January 13

MAN MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.—Gen. 1. 26 to 2. 3.

Study Gen. 2. 4-25.

Memorize verses 26, 27.

26. And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27. And

God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28. And God blessed them: and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. **29.** And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for food: **30** and to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, *I have given* every green herb for food: and it was so. **31.** And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. **1.** And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. **2.** And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. **3.** And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.

Golden Text.—God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him.—Gen 1. 27.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Man Made in the Image of God, Gen. 1. 26 to 2. 3. *T.* Man's first home, Gen. 2, 4-17. *W.* Man's dominion, Psa. 8. *Th.* "In Him we live," Acts 17. 22-31. *F.* Our Creator, Psa. 100. *S.* Created for his glory, Isa. 43. 1-7. *S.* Many members, 1 Cor. 12. 12-26.

Introduction: In His Image

The image of himself in which God created man is not that of bodily form, but that of his spiritual nature. Man resembles the divine nature, and at the same time differs from every other animal, in the possession of *self-conscious reason*; in his creative power, and in his ability to follow in a measure the workings of God's mind to employ the hidden forces of nature; in his possession of a moral sense, or his ability to distinguish right from wrong; in his capacity for knowing God, of feeling his relation to God, and of holding special communion with him. From this truth there necessarily follows the possibility of God revealing himself to man and of the Incarnation (John 1. 1-14), and also the possibility of the spiritual regeneration of a person who through sin has permitted the divine image within him to become marred.

Explanation: A Textual Study

26. Let us make—Again the plural of majesty, which on this solemn and momentous occasion is used by God himself. Some have thought that we have in these words an intended suggestion of the Trinity, but the revelation of that profound truth belongs properly

to a much later stage in the history of revelation, which was progressive in its nature. **Have dominion**—In the exercise of the superior powers given to him, and in the possession of which man resembled God. Comp. Psa. 8. 5, 6 (Rev. Ver.): “For thou hast made him but little lower than God (Heb. *Elohim*), and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.” **27. The image of God**—Comp. “Introduction,” above. **28. Replenish**—Lit., *fill*. This was also the original meaning of the English word “replenish.” **29. To you it shall be for food**—We have here possibly a picture of the *ideal* condition in which not even human life is sustained at the cost of other animal life. In 9. 3, however, permission is given to man to eat the flesh of animals also: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be food for you; as the green herb have I given you all.” **31. Behold, it was very good**—The closing verdict on the entire work of creation. **And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day**—That the six days of creation are conceived in Genesis as days of twenty-four hours each should be clearly evident to all. Each day begins with morning and concludes with evening, and the seventh day is identified with the Jewish Sabbath. It is equally plain that the author is not concerned about the scientific accuracy of his account of creation. In simple, idealistic language he sets forth the sublime truths it is his purpose to teach. (Comp. “Application” to Lesson I, above.) “The error lies with those who attempt to interpret materially and scientifically what was intended religiously and ideally.” (Worcester, *Genesis in the Light of Modern Knowledge*, p. 87.) **2. On the seventh day God finished his work**—That is, brought his work to a close by not continuing it on that day as he had done on preceding days. **His work**—Lit., *his appointed work*, that is, the creation he had set himself. **3. Blessed . . . and hallowed it**—Differentiated it from other days by attaching special blessing to its right observance.

Application: The Sabbath—Why Keep It Holy?

I. A Physical Necessity for Rest and Change of Thought and Occupation.—If for no other reason than that its observance contributes largely and directly to the physical welfare of man, the Sabbath should be considered sacred and inviolable. Ordinary week-day occupations should cease as far as this is not incompatible with the absolute necessities of life and comfort. **II. A Religious Necessity for Worship and Prayer.**—No part of the average man’s life is more neglected than his religious nature. The busy occupation of the week shuts out the possibility of much meditation on things pertaining to his higher soul-welfare. The change of occupation should therefore be in line with his highest spiritual needs. Worship, prayer, meditation, the study of God’s Word—these are essential elements in the right observance of the Sabbath day. **III. A Social Necessity for Christian**

Fellowship and Coöperation in Good Works.—There is much in life that tends to make man selfish. But selfishness mars character and is the very essence of sin. Fellowship with others of God's children in worship and in works of benevolence is essential to symmetrical development of Christian character. For this the Christian Sunday provides a suitable opportunity. "Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day."

For Further Discussion

To what extent does man in his present-day condition reflect the image of God? What tends to mar the image of God in man? How should Sunday be spent by a person in my circumstances? How is the Christian Sunday related to the Jewish Sabbath?

LESSON III.—January 20

MAN'S SIN AND GOD'S PROMISE.—Gen. 3. 1-6, 13-15

Study Gen. 3.

Memorize verse 15.

1. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? 2. And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. 13. And Jehovah God said unto the woman, What is this thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. 14. And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15 and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Golden Text.—For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.—1 Cor. 15. 22.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Man's Sin and God's Promise, Gen. 3. 1-15. *T.* Result of disobedience, Gen. 3. 17-24. *W.* All have sinned, Psa. 14. *Th.* Evidence of [Jan. 20]

sinful nature, Rom. 7. 18-25. *F.* The source of sin, 1 John 3. 4-10. *S.* Confession and forgiveness, 1 John 1. *S.* Sin and grace, Rom. 5. 12-21.

Introduction: Sin Defined

Sin in its broadest sense is any transgression of or nonconformity to the laws of God. When this nonconformity to God's law on the part of an individual is conscious and intentional, the sin is personal sin; when it is the result of inherited physical or psychical (mental) conditions, and for which the individual therefore is not personally responsible, it is inherited sin or depravity. Personal sin involves self-decision and a self-conscious, willful violation of the moral judgment. Depravity, on the contrary, is irresponsible lawlessness in individuality. Nonconformity to God's law (lawlessness) in social life, considered as the rebellion of the human race against God, is racial sin, or racial depravity. (Comp. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 207.)

Explanation: A Textual Study

The passage intervening between our last lesson and this one (Gen. 2. 4-25) contains a second or supplemental account of the creation differing from the preceding account both as to the details and the order of the events, and also in style. This, together with the fact that the word *Yahweh* is used for God in this second account, but not in the preceding, has led biblical scholars to conclude that the two accounts represent separate and distinct original narratives which later were combined as we have them in our present book of Genesis.

1. The serpent was more subtle—To primitive and semi-primitive peoples the serpent by its peculiar habits always suggested something mysterious and supernatural. It was therefore credited with great cunning, with subtle malevolence and wisdom in an evil sense. It here appears as the representative of the power of temptation, though not specifically as the embodiment of Satan. The word "subtle" here means *wily or crafty*.

Jehovah—The personal name of the God of the Hebrews, *Yahweh*, was held in such profound reverence that it was never spoken. In reading and speaking the word *Adonai*, meaning Lord, was substituted for it in oral utterances. In later centuries, when Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, the vowels (vowel points) of the latter word were printed with the consonants of the word *Yahweh* to indicate that the one word was to be substituted for the other in oral reading. This combination of the vowels of *Adonai* with the consonants of *Yahweh* when literally transcribed into English gives the word *Jehovah*, which, though really a corruption of the Hebrew word *Yahweh*, has come through long usage to be accepted as good English.

2. The garden—For the beginning of the story of the garden of Eden read the preceding chapters.

3. The tree which is in the midst of the garden—“The tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (2. 9).

4. Ye shall not surely die—The first suggestion of the tempter was one of doubt—“Yea,

hath God said" (v. 1), the second is to positive unbelief.

5. God doth know...ye shall be as God—The serpent attributes the prohibition to selfishness and envy, qualities often ascribed to the gods by ancient peoples.

13. The woman said, The serpent beguiled me—The man, when forced to confess his disobedience, had sought to extenuate it by casting the blame upon the woman, and even on God himself, by saying, "The woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman in turn blames the serpent. Thus does the unrepenting evil doer seek always to excuse himself and his own wickedness. Sin makes of man a coward.

14. Above—Lit., from among. **15. He shall bruise thy head**—The promise of this verse has been called the *Protevangelium*, from the fact that it has been considered by many to be a direct prophecy of a Messiah or Redeemer to come. But the passage itself prophesies only a perpetual enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, as a result of which both shall suffer ("thou shalt bruise his heel"). But since the serpent was the real offender, this conflict, ordained by God, can only end in ultimate victory for man, the aggrieved party. The passage does, therefore, contain by inference a message of promise and hope, and that at the very outset of the history of redemption.

Application: Man's Need of Redemption

I. His Need of Forgiveness.—Because of his personal, conscious, and willful transgression of God's law, by which he has alienated himself from God, man needs to be forgiven and reinstated in the divine fellowship. "For all have sinned" (Rom. 3. 23); "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1. 8); "Guilty of all" (James 2. 10).

II. His Need of Regeneration.—Because through his disobedience and sin he has become corrupt and disrupted in his individual, personal, and moral life, "he needs to have his entire being reorganized and harmonized and made complete." "From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness" (Isa. 1. 6).

III. The Racial Need.—"As a shattered brotherhood, mankind needs to be made over into a new race, with a divine Center, and a membership of perfect coalescence in love and service." "They are all gone aside"—"There is none that doeth good, no, not one." (Psa. 14. 3). (Comp. Curtis, *The Christian Faith*, p. 207.)

For Further Discussion

In what sense, if at all, may a specific action or bearing be sinful for one person and not for another? Are so-called sins of omission real sins? Give illustrations. Give as many of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament as you can.

THE STORY OF CAIN AND ABEL.—Gen. 4. 3-15.

Study Gen. 4.

Memorize verses 8-10.

3. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4. And Abel he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7. If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it. 8. And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. 9. And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? 10. And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11. And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand; 12 when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth. 13. And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it will come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me. 15. And Jehovah said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him.

Golden Text.—Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.—1 John 3. 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Story of Cain and Abel, Gen. 4. 3-15. *T.* The sin of hatred, 1 John 3. 10-18. *W.* Abel's faith, Heb. 11. 1-6. *Th.* Envy and strife, James 3. 13-18. *F.* Works of the flesh, Gal. 5. 13-26. *S.* Sacrifice rejected, Prov. 15. 1-9. *S.* Anger condemned, Matt. 5. 17-24.

Introduction: Beginnings Accounted For

The book of Genesis is preëminently a book of beginnings. Following its account of creation and the origin of the human race it proceeds to explain also the origin of many existing facts of nature and of human nature, and of social customs and institutions as well. The facts explained thus far in chapters 1 to 3 are the institution of the family life, the presence of sin in the world, and the loss by man of his primeval innocence, the custom of wearing clothing, the peculiar gait and habits of the

serpent, the subject condition (among ancient peoples) of woman, the toilsomeness of agriculture, and the existence in the world of suffering and pain. In chapter four the beginning of city life, polygamy, music, and metallurgy are explained and the earliest public worship of God is described. The chapter as a whole deals with three principal subjects. 1. Cain's murder of his brother Abel and subsequent punishment (4. 4-16); the origin of early arts among Cain's descendants (4. 17-24); and the mention of Adam's third son, Seth, and his son Enosh. The line of Cain's posterity is followed through seven generations, from Adam, as far as Lamech's sons; that of Seth is given more completely (through ten generations to Noah) in the next chapter.

Explanation: A Textual Study

3. In process of time—More than a score of years had passed since the gates of Eden had closed upon Adam and Eve. Two sons had been born to them and had grown to manhood, Abel becoming "a keeper of sheep" and Cain "a tiller of the ground." Each now brings **an offering unto Jehovah**, and the character of the offering in each case corresponds to the peculiar occupation of the man who brings it. **5.** Both offerings seem to have been equally perfect of their kind, **but unto Cain and to his offering he (Jehovah) had not respect**—In what manner Jehovah made his displeasure manifest to Cain is not explained, but in the next verse he is represented as speaking with Cain by word of mouth. **And Cain was very wroth**—His anger betrays the secret reason for Jehovah's displeasure with his offering. Manifestly the spirit in which the offering was made was that of haughty pride rather than of humble adoration and submission. The custom of sacrifice is represented as being the spontaneous and natural way in which man from the first acknowledged God and his blessing and expressed gratitude to him.

7. If thou doest well—Referring to the spirit and purpose which controlled his action. **Coucheth at the door**—Of thy dwelling or heart, ready to enter. From evil, envious thoughts spring sinful, overt acts. **Unto thee shall be its desire**—It is eager to spring like a crouching tiger upon you and overpower you. **Do thou rule over it**—Implying on the part of man the power to resist temptation and the power of self-control.

8. Told—Lit., said, or spoke unto. **9. I know not**—A murderer has no scruples about lying; the greater sin presupposes the lesser. **Am I my brother's keeper?**—The implication of this defiant answer is that Jehovah, who had taken delight in Abel's offering, should himself have watched over his favorite. **11. From the ground**

—Either in the sense that the curse is to proceed forth from the ground, as verse 12 seems to indicate —**When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength**—or in the sense of **away from**, the thought in this case being that Cain is to leave the cultivated soil on which he has hitherto prospered, and become a lonely wanderer in wild and desolate regions. **14. Whosoever findeth me.** Doubt-

less Cain understood that the curse pronounced against him would rest upon his posterity as well, a reference to whom is included in his use of the pronoun *me*.
15. Sevenfold—By the slaying of seven of the murderer's family to atone for Cain's death. **A sign for Cain**—What this sign was is not stated, and speculation with regard to what it may have been is idle.

Application: A Contrast

I. The Momentum of Sin.—1. The direction of sin is downward; from bad to worse is the rule. 2. There is no standstill in the moral development of an individual, of a generation, or of a race. It is only a question of direction. 3. Sin possesses great momentum and develops with frightful rapidity. Disobedience in the first generation of men becomes murder in the second; excuse-making in the first becomes bold defiance to God's authority in the second. Or, taking its development in the individual: Cain's haughty spirit in bringing his offering becomes anger and envy and hatred when it encounters God's disfavor. These in turn lead directly and quickly to violence and bloodshed.
II. To God's Justice is Added Mercy.—1. God's justice demands the punishment of sin. 2. But the toil and the manual labor to which, because of their disobedience, he condemns man proves to man a blessing in disguise, and the severity of the sentence pronounced upon Cain is mitigated by God's promise of protection. Through God's justice everywhere shines forth his love and his mercy.

For Further Discussion

Does one wrong act consciously committed inevitably lead to another? Do men inherit tendencies to wicked lives? Why is it easier to tell the second lie than the first? To what extent is mercy compatible with justice?

Lesson V.—February 3

NOAH SAVED IN THE ARK.—Gen. 8. 1-16

Read Gen. 6-9.

Memorize verses 1-3.

1. And God remembered Noah, and all the beasts, and all the cattle that were with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters assuaged; 2 the fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; 3 and the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of a hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4. And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. 5. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. 6. And it came

to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made: 7 and he sent forth a raven, and it went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. 8. And he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; 9 but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him to the ark; for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: and he put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her in unto him into the ark. 10. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; 11 and the dove came in to him at eventide; and, lo, in her mouth an olive-leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. 12. And he stayed yet other seven days, and sent forth the dove; and she returned not again unto him any more. 13. And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dried. 14. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry. 15. And God spake unto Noah, saying, 16. Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

Golden Text.—The salvation of the righteous *is* of Jehovah.—Psa. 37. 39.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* A sinful world, Gen. 6. 5-18. *T.* The flood, Gen. 7. 11-24. *W.* Noah saved in the Ark, Gen. 8. 1-16. *Th.* God's promise to Noah, Gen. 9. 8-17. *F.* Preacher of righteousness, 2 Pet. 2. 1-9. *S.* Warning against neglect, Matt. 24. 32-42. *S.* God's mercy, Isa. 54. 4-10.

Introduction: Flood Traditions

Traditions regarding a universal flood are found among many nations and in almost every quarter of the globe. With regard to their more exact geographical distribution, it may be said that such traditions are found in western Asia, Thibet, India, in the peninsula of Kamchatka, in Australia, and on most of the islands of the Pacific, among the Indian races of North America, and in Central and South America. They are not found in Africa, Arabia, in central and northern Asia, or in Japan, except where Christian influences have introduced the Bible and its story. China has a flood tradition also, but it speaks only of the destruction of *many* (not all) people, and does not represent the flood as having covered the whole earth. China is therefore usually excluded from the list of countries having genuine flood traditions.

Of all these traditions those of the Babylonians are most closely related to the narrative in Genesis. The Chaldean account preserved on cuneiform tablets, and which in its original form dates back to about 2000

B. C., says that at the advice of the god Ea, Sit-napistim of Surippak, on the Euphrates, "built a ship in which he secured seeds of life of every kind, as also his family, servants, and friends." The deluge which followed reached to heaven and lasted seven days. The ship landed on a mountain in northeastern Babylonia. A dove, a swallow, and a raven were sent out, and finally Sit-napistim and those with him were able to leave the ship.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. God remembered Noah—Kept him in mind and had regard for his needs and welfare. **Assuaged**—Ceased to increase and began to decrease. **2. The fountains . . . of the deep**—Great subterranean caverns from which waters were thought to gush forth to augment the floods caused by the downpour of rain. **Windows of heaven**—Openings in the solid firmament of heaven through which *the waters which were above the firmament* were conceived of as descending upon the earth. These and many similar expressions found in the Old Testament, which have long since become mere figures of speech, nevertheless reflect ideas of the universe actually current among men in the earlier ages of human history. **3. Continually**—Steadily, more and more. **4. The seventh month**—The Hebrew month *Tishri*, corresponding to our September-October, the year beginning with the month *Abib*, or *Nisan*, which corresponded to our March-April. **Ararat**—A lofty peak on the mountainous plateau of Armenia, 17,000 feet above the sea. **5. The tenth month**—*Tebeth*. **On the first day**—Seventy-three days after the ark's keel first rested upon the higher mountain—**were the tops of the (lower) mountains seen**. **6. At the end of forty days**—That is, after the rain first ceased to fall. **7. Until the waters were dried up**—Sufficiently to permit alighting. **10. Stayed**—Waiting. **Yet other seven days**—Indicating that in all probability the words, *and he stayed seven days*, should be inserted between the seventh and eighth verses. **13. The six hundred and first year**—Of Noah's life.

Application: Conscience, Justice, Obedience

I. Conscience.—The human conscience is very wonderful, and on the whole very just, condemning sin and unrighteousness in man and indorsing even the severest of God's judgments against individuals and nations. The sense of right and wrong is the common heritage of all members of the human race. Every normal individual possesses that sense—has a conscience. Ideals and standards may vary with the stage of development and the training of the race or individual, but even the lowest standard is high enough to leave room for a definite consciousness of shortcoming in the sight of God.

II. Justice.—It is the glory of the religion of the ancient Hebrews that it recognized on'y Jehovah, the one true God, and that it represented him as ethically perfect—holy, just, and merciful. In this respect especially the

Hebrew religion differed from the religions of all other ancient peoples. These were not only polytheistic, but attributed to their deities the imperfections, the passions, the injustice, and the sins of men. III. *Faith and Obedience*.—Doubtless the greatest lesson of the flood story for us is that of implicit faith and obedience. The author of the book of Hebrews phrases that lesson in these words: “By faith Noah, being warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; through which he condemned the world, and became heir to the righteousness which is according to faith” (Heb. 11. 7). God’s word standeth sure; and whether that word be a word of warning or a promise it is in either case certain of being fulfilled.

For Further Discussion

In the Bible narrative what events intervene between last Sunday’s lesson and this one? What reason does the narrative itself assign for the flood? What significance, if any, is there in the fact that the justice of this severe punishment is not called into question? Have all men a sense of right and wrong? Is the human conscience a reliable criterion of right and wrong? What traits of character in Noah are worthy of emulation? Tell what you can about the flood traditions of other nations and peoples. What does the wide prevalence of these traditions suggest?

Lesson VI.—February 10

ABRAM CALLED TO BE A BLESSING.—Gen. 12. 1-8.

Read Gen. 10-12.

Memorize verses 1-3.

1. Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto the land that I will show thee: 2 and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing: 3 and I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. 4. So Abram went, as Jehovah had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. 5. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. 6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Shechem, unto the oak of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. 7. And Jehovah appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto Jehovah, who appeared unto him. 8. And he removed from thence unto the

mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent having Beth-el on the west, and Ai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto Jehovah, and called upon the name of Jehovah.

Golden Text.—I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing.—Gen. 12. 2.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Abram Called to Be a Blessing, Gen. 12. 1-8. *T.* Abram's faith, Heb. 11. 6-10. *W.* Stephen's reminder, Acts. 7. 1-7. *Th.* Moses called to service, Exod. 3. 1-12. *F.* Jesus calls disciples, Mark 1. 14-21. *S.* Matthew called, Mark 2. 13-20. *S.* Reward of followers, Mark 10. 23-31.

Introduction: Abram

From Noah to Abram it was the line of Shem in which the knowledge of the true God was perpetuated. (Comp. Gen. 9 and 10.) In Abram, to whom God reveals himself more distinctly and fully, this knowledge reaches a higher stage, and Abram lives an exemplary life of faith and obedience among heathen neighbors. Viewed in perspective, we behold in Abram the great and divinely inspired leader of a racial movement westward from Chaldea on the Euphrates to Canaan in Syria about 2250 B. C., the patriarch and founder of the Hebrew race, and one of the most illustrious characters of all history. His faith and obedience to God were manifested in his willingness to separate himself from his former associations and to go forth into an unknown land, where in the providence of God "he instituted the church or kingdom of spiritual religion in the earth," so that "devout believers of every age and tongue look back to him as father of the faithful." Concerning the change of name from Abram to Abraham, and some of the important events in the life history of this illustrious patriarch we shall speak in subsequent paragraphs

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Thy country—Haran, a city and surrounding province in the northwestern part of Babylonia, north of the Euphrates River and about equally distant from Babylon to the southeast and Jerusalem to the southwest. In Gen. 11. 31 we are told that Terah, the father of Abram, had himself started with his family from Ur of the Chaldees, south of Babylon, "to go into Canaan," but having proceeded as far as Haran (550 miles from Ur) Terah decided to go no farther, but dwelt in Haran.

From thy kindred, and from thy father's house—The expressions emphasize the greatness of the demand made by Jehovah on Abram, when he required him to sever his family ties and go forth into an unknown land.

2, 3. I will make of thee a great nation—The promise is as great as the sacrifice required. Leaving his nation and kindred, Abram should himself become a great nation, and through him should **all the families of the earth be blessed**.

4. So Abram went, without parley or questioning, as Jehovah had spoken unto

him; and Lot, his nephew, went with him. 5. Their substance included sheep, horses, cattle, and other animals, clothing, silver and gold, and household possessions. **The souls that they had gotten—** Their children, servants, and slaves. In Gen. 14. 14 we learn that Abram had 318 trained servants. We are therefore to think of the migration of quite a company or tribe under the leadership of Abram. **Canaan—** So called because inhabited by the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham and grandson of Noah. **6. Shechem—** A town west of the Jordan in the territory later assigned to Ephraim, to be identified with the modern Neapolis or Nablus. **The oak of Moreh—** Mentioned subsequently in Gen. 35. 4; Josh. 24. 26, and Judg. 9. 6. "Moreh" was probably the name of the owner or planter of the tree. **7. Unto thy seed (descendants) will I give this land—** Here for the first time is the promise of the land given explicitly. **Builted he an altar—** The building of an altar and offering sacrifices thereon constituted the most important and conspicuous religious observance of patriarchal times. **8. Beth-el—** The modern *Beitin*, about ten miles north of Jerusalem. Here called Bethel by anticipation, since it was Jacob who later, according to Gen. 28. 19, gave the place this name, which literally means *house of God*: "And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first." **Ai—** Written also *Hai* and in various other forms. The name means *heap*. Mentioned again in Gen. 13. 3 and elsewhere. The site of Ai we learn from Joshua 7. 2 was beside Beth-aven, on the east of Bethel.

Application: Be Thou a Blessing

I. God's Purpose for Every Life.—"In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (v. 3); "Ye are the salt of the earth . . . the light of the world" (Matt. 5. 13, 14); "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke 6. 35). Our Lord's final application of the parable of the Good Samaritan was, "Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10. 37). "It is more blessed to give than to receive." **II. The Reflex Influence of Being a Blessing to Others.**—Part of God's purpose in intending for every man a life of usefulness and blessing to others is the development of character by means of ennobling self-activity. Charity, mercy, helpfulness in word and deed can bring to others only a fraction of the blessedness which these inevitably bring to the person himself who exercises these virtues. As Lowell in his Vision of Sir Launfal makes the Christ so fittingly express it, "Who gives himself with his alms feeds three: Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me." It is the selfish, self-centered life that dwarfs and is wasted. He that contributes most largely to the welfare and happiness of others gets the most out of life for himself. The joy that comes from unselfish service of one's fellowmen and the consciousness of having been a blessing to someone else is the deepest and truest joy that can come to any life. Our example, more than our words, influences those about us.

For Further Discussion

What light does recent Oriental research throw on the time of Abraham? What part do faith and obedience play in the religious life of a Christian? Name some other traits in Abraham's character.

LESSON VII.—February 17

LOT'S CHOICE.—Gen. 13. 1-13.

Read Gen. 13, 14, 19.

Memorize verses 8, 9.

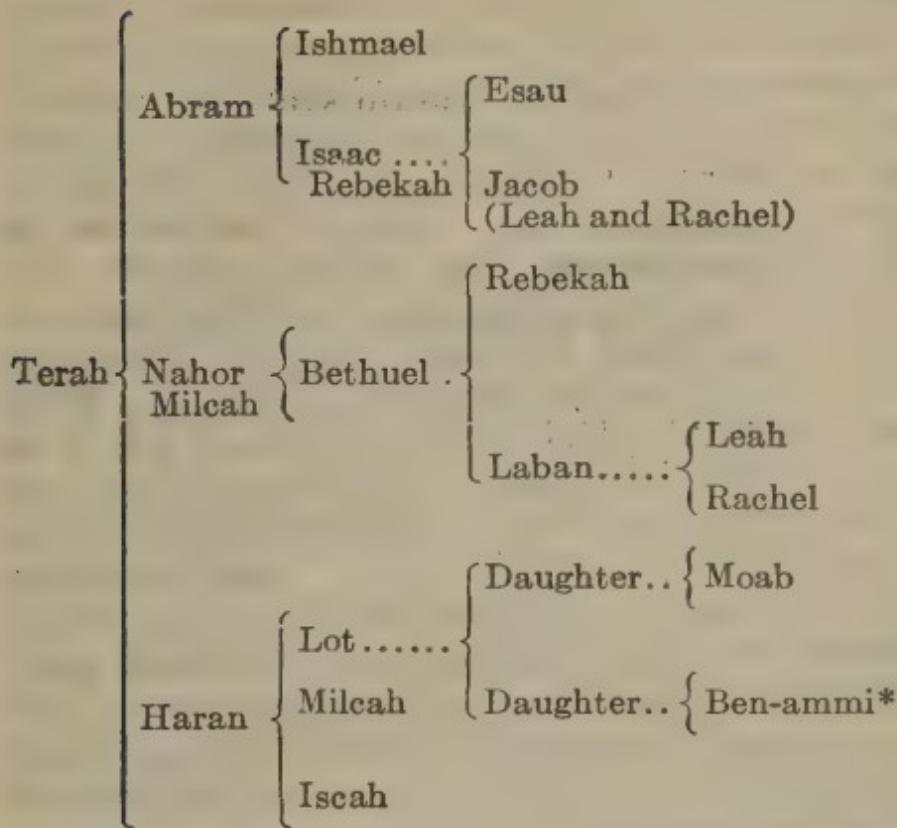
1. And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the South. 2. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 3. And he went on his journeys from the South even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Ai, 4 unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Jehovah. 5. And Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. 6. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. 7. And there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land. 8. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left. 10. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the Plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before Jehovah destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, like the garden of Jehovah, like the land of Egypt, as thou goest unto Zoar. 11. So Lot chose him all the Plain of the Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. 12. Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the Plain, and moved his tent as far as Sodom. 13. Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Jehovah exceedingly.

Golden Text.—Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness.—Luke 12. 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Lot's Choice, Gen. 13. 1-9. *T.* Lot's Choice, Gen. 13. 10-18. *W.* Abram rescues Lot, Gen. 14. 8-16. *Th.* God's presence sought, Exod. 33. 12-19. *F.* Evil companionship, 2 Cor. 6. 11-18. *S.* The right way, Psa. 1. *S.* Danger of covetousness, 1 Tim. 6. 3-12.

Introduction: Biographical

(Table of Family Relations)



*Ammonites

Lot's father, Haran, died (Gen. 11. 28) before Terah migrated to Haran (compare last lesson). Lot, with his family and possessions, accompanied his uncle Abram to Canaan, thence to Egypt, and back again to Canaan (12. 10; 13. 1). A few years after separating himself from Abram (compare to-day's lesson) Lot was taken prisoner by Chedorlaomer and subsequently rescued by Abraham (14. 12-16). His escape from Sodom and subsequent history is mentioned in Gen. 19. 1-38.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. During a time of famine in Canaan Abram and Lot had journeyed into Egypt, taking with them all their possessions. Sarai's and Abram's deception before Pharaoh, and the king's subsequent displeasure though leniency with Abram, are the principal incidents mentioned by the biblical narrator (12. 10-20). That both he and Lot left Egypt richer in flocks and herds and gold and silver is intimated both in verse 2 of our lesson and in the preceding chapter.
2. **Into the South**—The southern part of Canaan or Palestine.
3. **Bethel**—Compare note in last lesson.
4. **Called on the name of Jehovah**—Prayed as well as offering sacrifices.
5. **The land was not able to bear them**—Was not productive

enough to support both with their large households and immense flocks and herds. **7. A strife between the herdsmen** would apparently be unavoidable under the circumstances, since neither party had any title to the land, and each herdsman sought out for his own flock the best pasturage he could find. **Perizzite**—A people of central Palestine; or, possibly, as some think, simply the peasants or laboring people of the land—from *perazi* meaning *country folk*. **8. Abram said**—The magnanimous spirit revealed in the words of Abram is in every way worthy of the father of the faithful, and not far removed from the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. **We are brethren**—Near relatives. **10. Lifted up his eyes, and beheld**—Near Beth-el to the east there is a conspicuous hill from the brow of which this survey of **all the Plain of the Jordan** could well have been made. The valley—or, rather, gorge—of the Jordan widens into a plain near the mouth of the river. **Sodom and Gomorrah**—Two ancient cities situated in the Jordan valley, probably, near the northern end of the Dead Sea, the wickedness of whose inhabitants seems to have been proverbial. **As thou goest unto Zoar**—This phrase must be connected in thought with the phrase “well watered every where.” Zoar was situated near the southern end of the Dead Sea, and apparently marked the southern limit of the fertile plain which opened out so attractively before Lot. **11. Chose him**—Chose for himself. The tempting prospect of fertile pasture lands was more than Lot could resist. In making this selfish choice he disregarded both the prior claim of Abram and the wickedness of the people with whom he would be compelled to live.

Application: Character Tested

I. Abram's Character.—1. Was tested (*a*) by the possession of riches, which so often prove to be a barrier to holy living (v. 2); (*b*) by a conflict of interests with those of his younger relatives and fellow worshipers of Jehovah (v. 6); (*c*) by the injudicious conduct of his subordinates (v. 7); (*d*) by the seeming prosperity of the selfish and wicked. 2. Prominent elements in his character revealed in these testings: Prayerfulness (v. 4); love of peace (v. 8); generosity (v. 9); self-denial (v. 9). **II. Lot's Character.**—1. Was tested in the same way as was that of Abram. 2. Elements revealed: Worldly desire (v. 10); selfish decision (v. 11); evil associations (v. 13). **III. Suggestive Bible References.**—“Blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5. 9); “In honor preferring one another” (Rom. 12. 10); “Love not the world” (1 John 2. 15); “Choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (Heb. 11. 25); “Choose you this day whom you will serve” (Josh. 24. 15).

For Further Discussion

Has temporal prosperity any direct bearing on a person's spiritual life? Is peaceableness always a virtue? Is it always good policy? Is selfishness the

root of all evil? Is it the essence of all sin? How is Lot's manifest selfishness to be reconciled with his righteousness for which his life was spared? To what extent may selfishness and piety, vanity and a desire to serve God, be conspicuous in one and the same character?

LESSON VIII.—February 24

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAM.—Gen. 15. 1, 5-16

Read Gen. 15-17.

Memorize verses 5, 6.

1. After these things the word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward. 5. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and number the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6. And he believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness. 7. And he said unto him, I am Jehovah that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. 8. And he said, O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it? 9. And he said unto him, Take me a heifer three years old, and a she-goat three years old, and a ram three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon. 10. And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other: but the birds divided he not. 11. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12. And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him. 13. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15. But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16. And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.

Golden Text.—He believed in Jehovah; and he reckoned it to him for righteousness.—Gen. 15. 6.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* God's Covenant with Abram, Gen. 15. 1-16. *T.* The covenant renewed, Gen. 17. 1-8. *W.* Remembered, Exod. 6. 2-8. *Th.* Exhortation to praise, Psa. 105. 1-15. *F.* Another covenant, Jer. 31. 31-37. *S.* A better covenant, Heb. 8. 1-13. *S.* Our inheritance, 1 Pet. 1-9.

Introduction: Light on Abram's Age

Recent archæological discoveries in different parts of Assyria have confirmed in a most remarkable way the historicity of the narrative of Gen. 14, the chapter

intervening between this and our last lesson. Thus the four kings mentioned in 14. 1 have been identified with kings mentioned on Babylonian and Assyrian tablets and inscriptions dug from ruin heaps of ancient cities in these far-away lands. Most interesting and valuable among these ancient discoveries is the Code of Laws of Hammurabi, or Amraphel, as he is called in Gen. 14. 1, the sixth king of the first Babylonian dynasty. This code, which consists of 247 separate and distinct laws (about 2,500 lines) cut in stone, is well preserved though it antedates Moses and the Mosaic code by almost a thousand years. Though proceeding from a polytheistic people and a purely secular document, it shows the high state of civilization of that ancient period in which Abram, the Hebrew patriarch and father of the faithful, lived. From the fact that mutilated portions of this code have been found in different places it seems probable that Abram himself was well acquainted with this ancient document and its enactments. For a popular and inexpensive translation of this ancient code the student is referred to *The Code of Hammurabi and Moses*, by Prof. W. W. Davies, published by the Methodist Book Concern, New York and Cincinnati.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. After these things—The events narrated in the preceding chapter. **The word of Jehovah came unto**—An expression frequently used to designate a prophetic revelation. A common form of revelation was that of a **vision**. In Gen. 12. 2 and 13. 15 earlier promises of God to Abram are recorded. The long delay in the fulfillment of these promises further tests the strength of his faith. Having endured the test, two special assurances are given him that God's promises will surely be fulfilled. The following narratives set forth the further moral training and probation to which Abram is subjected, until at last the perfect man of God, the pattern of faith for all coming generations, stands out in bold relief from the rest of the narrative. **And thy exceeding great reward**—Or, *thy reward shall be exceeding great* (marginal reading). **5. Number the stars**—Count them. **6. He**, that is, Jehovah, **reckoned it to him**, Abram, **for righteousness**—Abram lived before the law of Moses was given, hence his righteousness could not be that of obedience to this formal law. His trust in and devotion to God, though more general in character, was, nevertheless deep and true. **7.** For events referred to, comp. 11. 28; 12. 7; 13. 15; 14. 9–11, 17. “The promise is ratified by a *covenant*, in which the contracting parties pass between the divided victims, each thereby symbolizing that, in case he breaks the terms agreed to, he is willing to be parted asunder in like manner. The ceremony described is not a sacrifice (for there is no altar), but a sacred and solemn act. Nevertheless it is a kind of type of the later sacrificial usage: for the animals prescribed are all such as are allowed in the later Levitical law, the birds not being divided (v. 10) on the analogy of Lev. 1. 17.”

—Driver. **11. Birds of prey**—An omen of evil, fore-

shadowing obstacles to the fulfillment of the divine promise. **Drove them away**—Signifying that every hindrance would be overcome and the terms of the covenant be fulfilled. **12. A deep sleep**—A favorable state for receiving visions. **12. A horror of great darkness**—Preparatory to the message of evil import about to be given. **13. Shall serve them**—The Egyptians, who in turn shall afflict the descendants of Abram **four hundred years**.—In Exod. 12. 40 the time of the sojourn of the Hebrews in Egypt is given more exactly as 430 years. **15. But thou shalt go to thy fathers**—No evil shall befall Abram personally, who shall be permitted to depart to Sheol, the realm of the departed dead, **in peace**. **16. Fourth generation**—Counting 100 years to each generation, according to the traditional age of the patriarchs, from Joseph to Moses. **Come hither again**—The reference to the exodus is obvious.

Application: The God of the Covenant

I. *His Revelation of Himself to Man*.—"The word of Jehovah . . . vision" (v. 1); "The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him" (Psa. 25. 14). II. *His Protecting Power*.—"Fear not: . . . I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (v. 1); "Fear not thou, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa. 41. 10). III. *His Abundant Mercies and Grace*.—"The stars . . . thy seed" (v. 5); "His mercy endureth forever" (Psa. 107. 1); "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments" (Exod. 20. 6); "Jehovah your God is gracious and merciful" (2 Chron. 30. 9); "For of his fullness we all received, and grace for grace" (John 1. 16). IV. *His Sovereignty*.—"Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12. 7); "The earth is Jehovah's, and the fullness thereof" (Psa. 24. 1).

For Further Discussion

What events intervene between our last lesson and this one? What may we learn from Abram as a conqueror? From Abram as a neighbor? How does God speak with men to-day? Just what is meant by God's voice in the sense in which that expression is used now? Do men always recognize God's voice? Does God reveal himself equally to all men? Have all men an equal chance to know and serve him? Has God revealed his truth and will to me sufficiently to enable me to work out my salvation?

LESSON IX.—March 3

ABRAHAM PLEADING FOR SODOM.—Gen. 18. 16–33.

Read Gen. 18.

Memorize verses 23–26.

16. And the men rose up from thence and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. **17.** And Jehovah said, Shall I hide

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from Abraham that which I do; 18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19. For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him. 20. And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; 21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. 22. And the men turned from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. 23. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou consume the righteous with the wicked? 24. Peradventure there are fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou consume and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? 25. That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked, that so the righteous should be as the wicked; that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? 26. And Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake. 27. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes: 28 peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, I will not destroy it, if I find there forty and five. 29. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for the forty's sake. 30. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. 31. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake. 32. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for the ten's sake. 33. And Jehovah went his way, as soon as he had left off communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

Golden Text.—Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke 18. 1.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Entertaining angels, Gen. 18. 1–8. *T.* Abraham Pleading for Sodom, Gen. 18. 16. 33. *W.* Destruction of Sodom, Gen. 19. 1–3, 13–25. *Th.* Intercession of Moses, Exod. 32. 7–14. *F.* Daniel's prayer, Dan. 9. 9–19. *S.* Encouragement, James 5, 10–20. *S.* Persevering prayer, Luke 18. 1–8.

Introduction: Concerning Prayer

Why should not man, the crown of God's creation, the one creature of all the living forms that move and breathe

on earth endowed with reason and fitted by nature to appreciate and grapple with the problems of ultimate reality—why should not *man* know and commune with God? To declare such knowledge and such communion impossible is to declare irrational and abnormal the highest product of man's intellectual, æsthetic, and moral nature—the religious sense and aspiration in which the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness unite in the one concept, God. The ideal which man is capable of conceiving he is also capable of approaching, and if that ultimate highest ideal be a rational mind, a Person, *God*, then has God already communed with man and vouchsafed to him an image and a revelation of himself; then does God ever reveal himself more fully to the human soul in secret, silent, sacred soul-to-soul communion. This communion of the human heart with God is prayer. Abraham prayed, and in his life and character we have a type of the kind of men who alone can pray. Abraham believed in God (comp. Heb. 11. 6), and lived his faith. His life was ordered in reference to that faith. His sense of God's majesty, holiness, and power made him humble; his faith in God's justice and mercy gave him confidence in prayer. From this faith and humility sprang other virtues—courage, conscientious industry, justice, magnanimity, and an unselfish interest in the welfare of others. The last-named virtue manifested itself in Abraham's intercessory prayer for the cities of the Plain.

Explanation: A Textual Study

16. The men—Jehovah and two angels in human form, according to verses 1 and 2, whom Abraham had entertained in his tent near Hebron. Jehovah is represented as thus appearing in person to once more announce to Abraham and Sarah the near fulfillment of the promise of a son. **Looked toward Sodom**—The city and plain could doubtless be seen from points of elevation in the hill country near Hebron. **17. Jehovah said**—In his heart, that is, *thought*. **Abraham**—Concerning the change of name from Abram to Abraham and its significance, see Gen. 17. 5. So also the change of Sarai's name to Sarah, see 17. 15. **18, 19.** Jehovah reveals to Abraham his purpose concerning Sodom and Gomorrah both because of the unique and important position he occupies as the founder of a chosen nation and also because of the patriarch's righteousness and worthiness to be thus specially favored. These special revelations were in turn to enable Abraham to command his children to **keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice**. Abraham's thus commanding his children and household after him, on the other hand, is the condition of Jehovah's fulfilling that which he hath spoken of him. **21. I will go down now, and see**—The language of this chapter reflects a very inadequate conception of God on the part of Abraham and his contemporaries. They think of him not as an Infinite, Eternal Spirit, but as one who finds it necessary to inform himself by more careful inquiry and the personal

observation of chosen messengers concerning the actual condition of affairs at Sodom. The biblical narrator also, though living many centuries later, had the same conception, and clearly intended the language of his narrative to be understood literally. Whether God, for pedagogical reasons, actually accommodated himself to these inadequate conceptions of men, actually assuming human form and even pretending not to know what in reality he did know perfectly, or whether we have in the narrator's language only a beautiful and naive anthropomorphism, cannot be settled arbitrarily or dogmatically. It is, however, but fair to say that many modern scholars of unquestioned rank and of deep piety accept the latter view. But, important as this point may seem, it is not really essential to the religious teaching of the narrative. The important truth which the inspired writer has preserved for us is that to Abraham God revealed himself more fully than to other men, and that Abraham, in the simplicity of a profound faith and trust in God's justice and mercy, communed with God, rising even to the high level of unselfish intercession for others.

25. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?—Lit., *do judgment*. The whole passage in which this question occurs bears witness to the deep-planted human instinct which requires justice in God.

32. I will not destroy it for the ten's sake—Abraham did not venture to ask further that Lot and his immediate family alone be spared. Yet God here, as always, does exceeding abundantly above that which man can ask or think.

33. Communing with—Or, *speaking to His place*—His tent by the oaks of Mamre (v. 1). With Abraham's prayer may be contrasted that of Lot, who in the hour of danger thought only of himself and his own comfort, seeming more willing to forsake his townsmen, the Sodomites, than the earthly possessions which he had acquired, at least in part, through long and willing association with them. The shadow of such a contrast will throw the noble character of Abraham into stronger relief.

Application: A Brief Study on Prayer

I. What Prayer Is Not.—1. It is not a vain repetition of words. "In praying, use not vain repetitions" (Matt. 6. 7). Prayer may or may not be clothed in words. 2. A prayer is not a finished literary production, intended to please the human ear (Matt. 6. 5). 3. It is not a form, but an attitude of mind. 4. It is not a duty, but an indispensable necessity of the Christian life. 5. It is not a virtue, but a priceless privilege.

II. Ascending Steps in Prayer.—1. The cry for help in great distress. Even the ungodly pray thus, and God hears. 2. Prayer for pardon, which presupposes a consciousness of sinfulness in the sight of God. 3. The daily communion of the child of God with the heavenly Father, presupposing humility, obedience, and absolute trust in God's goodness and power. 4. Intercessory prayer, the highest type of prayer, which forgets self in the thought of others. Thus Abraham prayed (v.

23-33), and Moses (Exod. 32. 31, 32), Nehemiah (Neh. 1. 1-11), Amos (Amos 7. 2-6), Paul (Rom. 1. 9; Eph. 1. 16-19; 3. 14-19; 1 Thess. 3. 10). III, *Jesus Our Teacher and Example*.—“The Lord’s Prayer” (Matt. 6. 9-13); exhortations to prayer (Matt. 7. 7; 18. 19; Mark 11. 24; Luke 11. 13; 21. 36; John 14. 13); the great intercessory prayer of Jesus (John 17) for his disciples.

For Further Discussion

Define prayer. Do all men pray? Can all men pray? Is all so-called prayer in reality such? Did Jesus live a life of prayer? Name five different circumstances under which he prayed. What constitutes an answer to prayer?

LESSON X.—March 10

ISAAC A LOVER OF PEACE—Gen. 26. 12-25.

Read Gen. 20-26.

Memorize verses 16, 17.

12. And Isaac sowed in that land, and found in the same year a hundredfold: and Jehovah blessed him. **13.** And the man waxed great, and grew more and more until he became very great: **14** and he had possessions of flocks, and possessions of herds, and a great household: and the Philistines envied him. **15.** Now all the wells which his father’s servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped, and filled with earth. **16.** And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. **17.** And Isaac departed thence, and encamped in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. **18.** And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. **19.** And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. **20.** And the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they contended with him. **21.** And they digged another well, and they strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah. **22.** And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now Jehovah hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23. And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba. **24.** And Jehovah appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake. **25.** And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of Jehovah, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac’s servants digged a well.

Golden Text.—Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.—Matt. 5. 9.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Isaac a Lover of Peace, Gen. 26. 12-25. *T.* A treaty of peace, Gen. 26. 26-33. *W.* Exhortation to peace, 1 Pet. 3. 8-17. *Th.* Wisdom of peace, James 3. 5-18. *F.* The peace of God, Col. 3. 9-17. *S.* The Peacemaker, Matt. 5. 1-12. *S.* “Our Peace,” Eph. 2. 8-18.

Introduction: Intervening Events

The chapters which intervene between our last lesson and this one record many important events, among which are the following: The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in the birth of Isaac; the departure of Hagar and Ishmael, and God's promise to Hagar concerning the future prosperity of her son (chap. 21); the severe trial of Abraham in the command to offer up Isaac, his son, and the renewed promise of Jehovah to Abraham of great blessings and prosperity to his descendants because of Abraham's implicit obedience (chap. 22); the death of Sarah and the purchase of the cave of Machpelah from Ephron the Hittite for a perpetual burial place (chap. 23); the betrothal and marriage of Isaac and Rebekah (chap. 24); the later marriage and descendants of Abraham; the death of Abraham and his burial by Isaac and Ishmael; the birth of Esau and Jacob and the selling of Esau's birthright to his brother Jacob (chap. 25). At a time of famine Isaac removed to the land of the Philistines, where his continued great prosperity aroused the envy of the inhabitants of the land, until finally Abimelech, king of the Philistines, requested that he (Isaac) depart from Philistine territory. At this point our lesson taken up the narrative.

Explanation: A Textual Study

12. In that land—The land of the Philistines in southwestern Palestine near the Mediterranean coast.
13. Waxed great—Was prosperous, **and grew more and more** in his prosperity. **14. The Philistines envied him**—Since much of his wealth was gained in their land, while they themselves did not prosper in like degree, their envy was the very natural result. In what form this envy found expression is indicated in verse 15, where we read that **the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth** the wells which Abraham had digged in the land. An envious person is usually blind to his own best interest. So in this case, since by the filling of the wells these people injured themselves quite as much as they injured Isaac. Their own lack of industry alone was to blame, moreover, for the fact that they had no wells of their own. **16. Abimelech**—King of the Philistines. **17. The valley of Gerar**—Six miles south of Gaza, which was the southernmost city of the Philistines; twenty-five miles northwest of Beer-sheba, and about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. **18. Isaac digged again the wells**—This with the crude

digging tools then in use was no small task. Probably, as in verse 19, it was **Isaac's servants** who actually did the work of digging. **Springing water**—Lit., *living water*, as the water of any flowing spring or stream was called. **20. Esek**—Meaning *contention*, because they contended there. **21. Sitnah**—Meaning *enmity*. **22. Rehoboth**—Meaning *broad places*, or *room*. To avoid further strife with the inhabitants of the land Isaac had been gradually withdrawing farther and farther to the southeast until he reached Beer-sheba. **23. Beer-sheba**—The dwelling place successively of Abraham (Gen. 21. 31), Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 28. 10), and later visited by Elijah on his way to Horeb (1 Kings 19. 3). In still later times it became a part of the territory of Simeon (Josh. 19. 2), and of the larger kingdom of Judah. In the early Christian centuries the vicinity was thickly inhabited, as old ruins of walls and buildings amply testify. The modern "Tell es-Seba" marks the site of the ancient village. Three ancient wells, two of which are still used by the Arabs, are near the site. One of these is confidently pointed out by the Arabs as the work of Ibrahim el-Khalil (Abraham the Friend).

Application: Traits in Isaac's Career

I. Prosperity.—"Jehovah blessed him . . . waxed great" (vv. 12, 13); "The blessing of Jehovah, it maketh rich" (Prov. 10. 22); "Godliness is profitable for all things" (1 Tim. 4. 8). The riches which God's blessing brings are not always temporal. Nor is temporal prosperity in any sense a criterion of a man's goodness, for "he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5. 45). The godly man who prospers in this world differs from the ungodly in that he acknowledges God to be the giver of all good and conquers the temptation to haughty pride. This Isaac did. **II. Opposition Prompted by Jealousy.**—"The Philistines envied him" (v. 14); "I saw all labor and every skillful work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor" (Eccles. 4. 4). The temptation to envy comes to all and should be guarded against. "Keep yourselves from all covetousness" (Luke 12. 15). **III. A Peacemaker.**—"Go from us; . . . Isaac departed" (vv. 16, 17); "If it be possible . . . be at peace with all men" (Rom. 12. 18). Isaac doubtless found the work of peacemaking difficult, but he found it possible at the cost of self-sacrifice. **IV. Guidance.**—"Jehovah hath made room for us" (v. 22; comp. I, above). "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths" (Prov. 3. 6). **V. Trust.**—"Fear not" (v. 24); "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8. 31). "I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation" (Psa. 91. 15, 16).

For Further Discussion

What is a Christian's duty in a situation in which it is impossible to make or keep peace with his neighbors? When and to what extent should a person "stand up

for his rights"? Was Isaac's love of peace a sign of strength or of weakness of character? What are the dangers to a Christian of worldly prosperity?

LESSON XI.—March 17

JACOB AND ESAU.—Gen. 27. 15-23, 41-45.

Read Gen. 27. 1-45; 29. 18-25; 37. 31-35. Memorize verses 21-23.

15. And Rebekah took the goodly garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son; 16 and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: 17 and she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. 18. And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19. And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. 20. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because Jehovah thy God sent me good speed. 21. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. 22. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. 23. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. 41. And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. 42. And the words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. 43. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; 44 and tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; 45 until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?

Golden Text.—Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah: but they that deal truly are his delight.—Prov. 12. 22.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Deception, Gen. 27. 1-14. *T.* Jacob and Esau, Gen. 27. 15-29. *W.* Esau's grief, Gen. 27. 30-40. *Th.* Jacob and Esau, Gen. 27. 41-45. *F.* Esau's folly, Gen. 25. 27-34. *S.* Privilege despised, Heb. 12. 9-17. *S.* Speaking the truth, Eph. 4. 17-32.

Introduction: The Hittite People

The mention of "Ephron the Hittite" and the children of Heth (Gen. 23. 10), as the people from whom Abraham subsequently purchased the cave of Machpelah, together with the statement (Gen. 26. 34, 35) that the two wives of Esau were of Hittite parentage, arouses our interest in the question as to who these strange people really were. On this question much light has been thrown in recent years by the discovery of inscriptions referring to them both in Babylonia and Egypt, together with the discovery of ancient strongholds and monuments of the Hittites themselves. From these combined sources we learn the following facts: The Hittites were neither Semites nor Aryans, but probably Mongolians, whom they resembled most nearly in physiognomy and dress. Their home was Asia Minor and northern Syria, their facial type still existing in the peasantry of Cappadocia. Their most prosperous national period was from about 1600 to about 700 B. C., after which latter date they were absorbed by the Assyrian empire. They had a peculiar language, and their queer hieroglyphic system of writing has thus far baffled the attempts of scholars to decipher. During the period in which they most flourished both Egypt and Babylonia stood in awe of their power. Their southernmost settlements in Palestine brought them in contact with the patriarchs and earlier generations of the Hebrew race. When we read on Egyptian monuments that they were "an ugly race, with yellow skins, black hair and eyes, receding foreheads, and protruding upper jaws," and altogether an uncouth and barbarous people, we can understand the biblical narrator when he says of the wives of Esau that "they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebecca" (Gen. 26. 35).

Explanation: A Textual Study

The last solemn blessing pronounced by a father before his death upon his son was in patriarchal times regarded as directly determining the future destiny of the son, though, as the language of Isaac's blessing clearly indicates (vv. 28, 29), the actual source of the boon spoken of is regarded as being God. Unless there was some special reason to the contrary, the oldest son was by custom entitled to receive from his father the first and choicest benediction. The blessing given to younger sons was a promise of inferior greatness if not of servitude. Isaac, having now become old and feeble and blind, decided that the time had come to give to his oldest son, Esau, this last solemn blessing. But Rebekah loved Jacob, the younger son, more than Esau, and it was her shrewdness and cunning which enabled Jacob to deceive his aged and blind father and steal his older brother's blessing. Since our lesson text contains but a fragment of the story, the whole chapter should be read.

15. The goodly garments of Esau—
His best hunting suit apparently. (Comp. v. 27.)

16. She (Rebekah) put the skins of the kids (with the fur side out) upon his hands, and upon the smooth

(hairless portion) **of his neck**—To make his hands and neck appear hairy, as were those of his brother Esau. (Comp. v. 11:) “Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man.” **19. I am Esau**—The intrigue of Rebekah and the shameless falsehood of Jacob are alike indefensible. The biblical narrator does not comment on either, leaving the reader to form his own judgment on the events recorded. (Comp. “Application,” below.) **Venison**—The meat Isaac had specially asked for (v. 7). **23. So he blessed him**—Esau coming in later is bitterly disappointed and pleads that he too be given a blessing. The first blessing, however, being irrevocable, a secondary and lesser blessing only remained for him. (Comp. vv. 24-40.) **41. The days of mourning for my father**—Subsequent to his death, which was now apparently imminent. **43. Laban . . . Haran**—See Lesson for February 10. **45. You both**—Isaac and Jacob.

Application: Jacob's Sin and Mine

I. Its Origin, Unbelief and Worldly Ambition.—Underlying the conduct of Jacob and Rebekah was unbelief in God's ability or willingness under the circumstances to fulfill his promise concerning Jacob's future (Gen. 25 23); and an undue ambition for the latter's welfare. Similarly unbelief in crucial circumstances, with worldly ambition, prompts many otherwise well-meaning, even deeply religious, persons to wrongdoing in our day. The popular excuse in such cases is that *the end justifies the means*. That excuse is always false. **II. Its Character, Immoral and Revolting.**—Defrauding relatives under the pretense of assisting God in the carrying out of his purposes is but one form of pious unscrupulousness. Other forms closely akin to that manifested by Rebekah and Jacob, more prevalent to-day, are: 1. The spreading by word of mouth unverifiable or unverified slander. 2. Favorable or unfavorable misrepresentation of a person, institution, or cause in order to gain a desired end. 3. The condemnation of men or their opinions “in the interest of religion,” without thoroughly understanding that which we condemn. 4. Shading or keeping back the truth. **III. Its Essence.**—An insult to God. **IV. Its Punishment.**—1. The estrangement of a brother (v. 41). 2. Necessity of flight and separation from loved ones. 3. Many trials, anxieties, and disappointments. Jacob's own verdict on his life at its close was, “Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life.” **V. Its Folly.**—By his first sad wrongdoing he lost much and gained nothing.

For Further Discussion

Was not Esau as culpable as Jacob in the matter of the loss of his birthright and blessing? What was his sin? How is it typical of the sins of many to-day? Is wrongdoing always punished in this life? Give examples. Is a lie ever permissible?

WOES OF DRUNKENNESS.—Isa. 28. 7-13.

Memorize verse 7.

7. And even these reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. **8.** For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean. **9.** Whom will he teach knowledge? and whom will he make to understand the message? them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts? **10.** For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little. **11.** Nay, but by men of strange lips and with another tongue will he speak to this people; **12** to whom he said, This is the rest, give ye rest to him that is weary; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. **13** Therefore shall the word of Jehovah be unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little; that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Golden Text.—Wine and new wine take away the understanding.—Hos. 4. 11.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Woes of Drunkenness, Isa. 28. 1-13. *T.* Source of woe, Isa. 5. 11-19. *W.* Punishment, Isa. 5. 20-25. *Th.* Way to poverty, Prov. 23. 12-23. *F.* Selfish luxury, Amos 6, 1-7. *S.* Drink and defeat, 1 Kings 20. 13-21. *S.* Watch! Matt. 24. 42-51.

Introduction: A Nation Rebuked

The twenty-eighth chapter of the book of Isaiah is one of the greatest of prophecies. It is addressed to the aristocracy and men in authority at Jerusalem, but its first part has to do mainly with the destruction of Samaria, the capital of the kindred nation of Israel. The basal sin of Israel was its apostasy from Jehovah to the worship of Baal and Astarte. Scoffing, pride, profligacy of life, oppression of the poor, and sin and corruption in high places were the fruit of this apostasy. The repeated warnings of Jehovah's prophets during many generations had been of no avail, and the long and merciful delay of threatened destruction had only served to harden the people in their indifference and wickedness. But at last the day of reckoning was at hand, and to Isaiah, the greatest of Hebrew prophets, it was given to announce beforehand the awful catastrophe. The doom of the northern kingdom and its cause, the shameless debauchery and godlessness of priests and people, are alike portrayed in graphic terms (vv. 1-13). Then, changing abruptly from the third to the second person in his speech, the prophet drives home his message of warning to the scoffers of his own city, Jerusalem. (vv. 14-29).

Explanation: A Textual Study

7. And even these—The magnates of Jerusalem among whom **the priest and the prophet** are singled out for special mention because they were the spiritual leaders of the people who opposed Isaiah in the name of Jehovah, and claimed to have the authority of divine revelation back of them in this opposition and in their support of the politicians. **Swallowed up of wine**—Perhaps, “confused with wine,” or “wholly absorbed in their carousing,” but the meaning in the original is not clear. **8. Vomit and filthiness**—To be understood literally. The awful state of things existing in the higher social circles of the capital city is set in a strong light by this pointed allusion to the scenes of revolting beastliness which accompanied the drunken carousals of the rich. **9. Whom will he teach knowledge?**—Words which must be thought of as spoken by the nobles and priests to the prophet by whom they have just been rebuked for their folly and sin. The prophet is quoting their retort to his message of warning in order to bring home more forcibly to them the prophecy of impending doom which follows in the next verses (11-13). The meaning of the whole retort is, “Who are we that we should be lectured by this man? Are we newly weaned infants?” etc. **10. Precept upon precept; line upon line**—The mocking stammering words of drunken men as they pretend to imitate the wearisome repetition of the prophet’s warning speech. The Hebrew is a series of repeated monosyllables the sense of which is not quite certain. **11.** To this mocking stammering jest the prophet answers, **Nay**, it is not my unwelcome and oft-repeated message which will grate upon your ear hereafter, but Jehovah himself is about to speak to you in a still more uncouth language, for, **by men of strange lips and with another tongue**, the harsh and barbarous accents of the Assyrian invaders, **will he speak to this people**. **12. This is the rest**—The course of action advocated by Jehovah’s prophet is the only means of averting disaster, **and this alone is the** one possible means of bringing **refreshing** to the exhausted nation and city. Those in charge of affairs at Jerusalem were hoping for help from Egypt against Assyria. The vanity of such a hope and the wisdom of timely surrender to Assyria had been pointed out by the prophet in previous messages of warning. **13. Therefore**, because all these warnings had been neglected **shall the word of Jehovah be unto them** all that they had scoffingly said of Isaiah’s message, that is, “a monotonous intolerable, yet unavoidable succession of judgments,” until they shall as a nation **be broken, and snared, and taken**.

Application: Alcoholism—Its Dangers

Statements from a French placard posted in conspicuous public places in different parts of the city of Paris by order of the municipal department of charities:

“Alcoholism is the chronic poisoning which results from the habitual use of alcohol, even when this does not produce drunkenness.

"The habit of drinking brings in its train loss of affection for one's family, forgetfulness of all social duties, distaste for work, misery, robbery, and crime. It leads, at least, to the hospital; for alcoholism begets the most various and deadly maladies: paralysis, insanity, affections of the stomach and liver, and dropsy. It is one of the most frequent causes of tuberculosis. Finally, it complicates and aggravates all acute sicknesses; typhoid fever, pneumonia, erysipelas, which would be mild in the case of a sober man, would, on the other hand, kill quickly the drinker of alcoholic liquors.

"With reference to the health of the individual, the existence of the family, and the future of the country, alcoholism is one of the most terrible scourges."

For Further Discussion

Who was Isaiah? When did he live and prophesy? In what city was his activity centered? What was the condition of affairs in Judah at the time the prophet wrote the words of our lesson text? in the northern kingdom of Israel? Is the evil of drunkenness always connected with other forms of sin and wickedness? Why abstain wholly from the use of intoxicating liquors?

LESSON XIII.—March 31.—Review

Read Psa. 104

Golden Text.—The Lord knoweth them that are his.
—2 Tim. 2. 19.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* God the Creator, Gen. 1. 1-25. *T.* Man Made in the Image of God, Gen. 1. 26 to 2. 3. *W.* Man's Sin and God's Promise, Gen. 3. 1-15. *Th.* Noah Saved in the Ark, Gen. 8. 1-16. *F.* Abram Called to Be a Blessing, Gen. 12. 1-8. *S.* God's Covenant with Abram, Gen. 15. 1-16. *S.* Abraham Pleading for Sodom, Gen. 18. 16-33.

Introduction

For the three months past we have been engaged in a study of the beginnings of human history and of the Hebrew nation. Our text-book has been the book of Genesis, concerning which a special word was said in the Preview on page 9 (which compare). We have noted the predominating religious purpose of these early biblical narratives, and have tried to discover their religious message for us. In the brief space allotted for this review we shall seek to gather up under several groups of questions the principal points and truths on which stress has been laid. The answer to each question will be contained in substance in some one of the lesson treatments for the Quarter.

Review by Lessons

Lessons I and II.—With what eternal problem does the first chapter of Genesis deal? Wherein lies the superiority of the Bible answer to this problem? In what sense was man created in the image of God? What reasons for keeping holy the Sabbath day are found in man's physical, social, and spiritual nature?

Lessons III to V.—How do the narratives of these lessons taken together in consecutive order illustrate the downward trend and destructive nature of sin? Distinguish clearly between the meaning of the following terms: Sin in its broadest sense; personal sin; depravity; racial sin. What light is thrown on conscience by the story of the flood?

Lessons VI to IX.—This group of lessons deals with the life and character of Abraham. About when did Abraham live? What great Babylonian king, contemporary with Abraham, was the author of a code of laws still in existence? With what king mentioned in Gen. 14. 1 is he to be identified? How does this code compare in age with the laws of Moses? What traits in Abraham's character distinguish him from his contemporaries?

Lessons X and XI.—*Isaac and his sons.*—What trait of Isaac's character is emphasized in Lesson X? What other traits worthy of emulation are prominent in his character? Who were the Hittites? What part do they play in the Bible narrative of this period?

Lesson XII.—*Woes of Drunkenness.*—From what prophetic book is our Temperance Lesson taken? Give the historical background of the lesson passage. What other evils are commonly associated with drunkenness? What are the evils of moderate drinking?

The Golden Text

It is suggested above that Psa. 104 be read in connection with the review for this Quarter. This psalm in the Revised Version has been given the superscription, "Jehovah's Care over all his Work." It is a song of praise in which the psalmist singer enumerates the great and mighty works of Jehovah in the creation and preservation of the world and all the works of nature, the moon and stars, the winds and floods, the birds and beasts, and every creeping thing. The thought of the whole psalm is well expressed in the words of the twenty-fourth verse: "O Jehovah, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches." But the crowning work of God is the creation of man in his own image to be a morally free and responsible being; and in man and his welfare and destiny, more than in all the other works of creation, God takes an interest. With fatherly care he watches over him especially who is true to his high destiny and calling as a child of God. Obedience and fidelity to God are not in vain. God knows and sees and rewards. This in part is the meaning of our short Golden Text, and this also has been the lesson we have learned from the life history of the Hebrew patriarchs about whom we have been studying during the past Quarter.

SECOND QUARTER

JACOB AND JOSEPH, ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Preview: Israel in Egypt

The historical events to which the lessons of the next three months are devoted cover the period from the flight of Jacob before Esau to the departure of the Israelites from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. It is the period of Israel's servitude and suffering in the early years of its national life. The condition of the people in Egypt during this period of servitude was not conducive to literary activity. Hence the records left referring to the time of their actual sojourn in Egypt are very brief. The Bible narrative places emphasis upon the patriarchal history preceding this period of national servitude, and upon the history of the nation subsequent to its deliverance from Egypt by the hand of Moses. The Bible record which we are to study during this quarter is equal to only a little more than one hundred pages of an ordinary high-school text-book on history; the maps necessary to understand the historical narrative are only two in number, and contain less than a dozen important places. It should be possible, therefore, for every pupil in the Senior Department of the school to thoroughly master both the chronological order of events and the location of the places mentioned on the maps of Egypt and Palestine.

Those who have access to histories of Egypt will find in them much to corroborate and illumine the brief biblical record of Israel's servitude.

LESSON I.—April 7

JACOB'S VISION AND GOD'S PROMISE.—Gen. 28.
1-5, 10-22.

Read Gen. 27. 46 to 28. 22. Memorize verses 13, 14.

1. And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. 2. Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. 3. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a company of peoples; 4 and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land of thy sojournings, which God gave unto Abraham. 5. And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Paddan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah,

Jacob's and Esau's mother. **10.** And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. **11.** And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it under his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. **12.** And he dreamed; and, behold, a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. **13.** And, behold, Jehovah stood above it, and said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; **14** and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. **15.** And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. **16.** And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place; and I knew it not. **17.** And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. **18.** And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. **19.** And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of the city was Luz at the first. **20.** And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, **21** so that I come again to my father's house in peace, and Jehovah will be my God, **22** then this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Golden Text.—Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee whithersoever thou goest.—Gen. 28. 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Jacob's Vision and God's promise, Gen. 28. 1-5, 10-22. *T.* The promise fulfilled, Gen. 35. 1-15. *W.* "I am with thee," Isa. 41. 8-14. *Th.* Safe keeping, Deut. 31. 1-8. *F.* Present to save, Jer. 30. 7-11. *S.* "My Refuge," Psa. 91. *S.* "My Helper," Psa. 121.

Introduction : Marriage

Among primitive peoples marriage was considered to be a concern of the family group or of the tribe. The custom of allowing the individuals concerned to arrange a marriage according to inclination is a late and exceptional concession. Under the patriarchal system in Israel power in such matters was vested in the father or nearest paternal relative. It is in the exercise of this patriarchal function that Abraham through a servant negotiates with Bethuel for the hand of Rebekah, and Laban as her brother is taken into counsel. Jacob also

followed the advice of his father Isaac, though Esau took matters into his own hands, not consulting his parents' wishes. The important part of the marriage seems to have been the betrothal, which was apparently a more solemn and sacred affair than the final consummation of the wedding itself. In later times the wedding procession and marriage supper became more prominent and more important.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Isaac called Jacob—The last verse of the preceding chapter explains that it was at Rebekah's suggestion that Isaac gave attention to this matter. The suggestion of Rebekah was apparently prompted by a desire to carry out to its final consummation her plans for her favorite son, Jacob. It is a further clever deception on her part by which she enlists the coöperation of the father in sending Jacob away until the anger of his brother Esau shall have subsided.

Daughters of Canaan—Natives of the land, possibly Hittites from among whom Esau had chosen his wives.

2. Paddan-aram—Lit., *the field of Aram*. This was in northern Mesopotamia in the vicinity of Haran, though its exact location cannot be determined.

Bethuel—

A nephew of Abraham and the father of Laban and Rebekah.

5. The Syrian—Heb., *the Aramean*. Verses 6–9 record the attempt of Esau to appease the displeasure of his parents and gain their good will by also taking a wife from among the descendants of Abraham: “And Esau went unto Ishmael, and took, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth, to be his wife.”

11. Lighted upon a certain place—Chanced to come there. What place it was is explained in verse 19, below.

12. Dreamed—All that follows, verses 12–15, is simply a dream, though one by means of which God very definitely communicated his will to Jacob.

A ladder—

This feature of the dream may have been suggested by the steep and terraced hillside on which Jacob had looked just before going to sleep. The natural features of the locality seemed to shape themselves into a flight of mighty steps of stone rising up toward heaven.

Angels of God ascending and descending—Symbolical of the intercourse which is ever taking place between heaven and earth. In John 1. 51 Jesus seems to have this vision of Jacob and its symbolical meaning in mind.

14.

Spread abroad—Heb., *break forth*. To the west, east, north, and south—A promise literally fulfilled in the time of David and Solomon when the united kingdom reachest its farthest bounds.

16. I knew it not—

Jacob seems to have been accustomed to associate Jehovah's presence with the places at which his ancestors had dwelt and worshiped. It is difficult even for us to think of God as everywhere present.

18. The stone . . .

for a pillar—The Hebrew word translated “pillar” means literally *standing-stone*. Such sacred stones or pillars (“monoliths”) are often alluded to in the Old Testament as the distinguishing mark of a shrine or sacred place. They usually stood beside the altars of

worship. In later times their use was forbidden in connection with the altars of Jehovah (Deut. 16. 22), on account of their heathen association and the fact that they prompted to idolatrous conceptions and ceremonies. **Poured oil upon the top of it**—Thus solemnly consecrating it to be a permanent memorial. 19.

Beth-el—Lit., *the house of God*. (Comp. verse 17.) Beth-el in later times became a prominent sanctuary, and after the division of the kingdom the sacred sanctuary of the northern kingdom. **Luz**—Luz was the ancient city; the sacred place Beth-el was in reality outside the city, but, being the better known and more famous, ultimately came to be the city known by the same name. (comp. Gen. 35. 6; 48. 3; Josh. 16. 2; Judg. 1. 23.) 22. **Give the tenth unto thee**—From Amos 4. 4 we learn that in later times tithes were paid at Beth-el: “Come to Beth-el, . . . and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days.”

Application: Upon the Son of Man

(John 1. 51)

I. *The Import of Jacob's Vision*—This was at least twofold: Symbolically setting forth the intercourse between heaven and earth, between God and man. “Am I a God at hand, saith Jehovah, and not a God afar off?” (Jer. 23. 23). “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?” (Psa. 139. 7.) Communion with God is the privilege of every man. 2. Revealing the fact that God is interested in man despite past failures and shortcomings. Jacob had sinned and was even now a fugitive from justice, and we are not told the state of his mind or the degree of his contrition and repentance, yet God condescends to take notice of him; to reveal himself to him and to encourage him. II. *The interval between earth and heaven* has been ultimately and completely bridged by Jesus Christ. In Christ’s person the human and the divine are united, and we cannot tell oftentimes whether the Christ whom we know from the gospel narrative is more divine or human, more God or man. Only when we contemplate more profoundly the significance of his words and his deeds, and let our thought follow step by step to the heights of his inner personal life, do we recognize the divinity, the Godhood, in him. The realization of this fact brings to man a new vision of life, a new comprehension of the meaning and significance of humanity and of his own personal existence. This vision, in turn, lifts life above the sphere of the commonplace with its dreary round of duties, its short-lived joys, its punished sins, into a higher realm where the tender guidance and loving care and constant encouragement of a kind Providence is recognized.

For Further Discussion

Strong and weak points in Jacob’s character thus far discernable. Character contrasts between Esau and Jacob. God’s interest in sinful men. Why was God

especially interested in, and why did he protect, such a wicked man as Jacob seems to have been? Means of communication between God and man.

LESSON II.—April 14

GOD GIVES JACOB A NEW NAME.—Gen 32. 9-12,
22-30

Read Gen. 29-35.

Memorize verses 26-28.

9. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good: 10. I am not worthy of the least of all the lovingkindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies. 11. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, the mother with the children. 12. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. 22. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two handmaids, and his eleven children, and passed over the ford of the Jabbok. 23. And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over that which he had. 24. And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained, as he wrestled with him. 26. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. 27. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. 28. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed. 29. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. 30. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for, said he, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Golden Text.—Rejoice, that your names are written in heaven.—Luke 10. 20.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Jacob's return, Gen. 31. 1-3, 13-18. *T.* God Gives Jacob a New Name, Gen. 32. 1-12. *W.* God Gives Jacob a New Name, Gen. 32. 13-21. *Th.* God Gives Jacob a New Name, Gen. 32. 22-30. *F.* Brothers reconciled, Gen. 33. 1-11. *S.* Prayer answered, Psa. 34. 1-10. *S.* The new name, Rev. 3. 7-12.

Introduction: Repaid in Kind

When Jacob finally reached Haran he was received by Laban cordially, though not in so brilliant and exceptional a way as he may have anticipated. Sad dis-

pointments, moreover, awaited him. After finding the woman whom he could love he was compelled to purchase her with seven years of toil which ultimately became fourteen.. But the bitterest disappointment and humiliation for him must have been the deception of Laban, who deliberately cheated him, the veiled woman whom he received as his wife from the hand of her father proving to be, not Rachel, but Leah. Jacob could hardly help seeing in this turn of events a just retribution for his earlier deception and his injustice to his brother Esau. But in this case also what seemed to be a cruel injustice proved in the end to be a blessing in disguise. "Thus he learned the fruitfulness of God's retribution—that to be humbled by God is really to be built up, and to be punished by him the richest blessing."

Explanation: A Textual Study

The relation between Laban and his nephew Jacob seems to have been one of mutual distrust and deception. Laban acknowledges finally that the presence of Jacob with him has brought him prosperity, but he selfishly seeks to augment this prosperity by retaining the services of Jacob without due compensation for the same. Jacob, however, is not to be cheated out of his due reward, and by shrewdness in time amasses a great fortune of his own, consisting, as the fortune of Laban, in flocks and herds. Noting the displeasure and envy of his uncle, he gathers his wives and children, his flocks and herds together, and departs secretly, determined to return unto his parents and his brother Esau. Arriving in Gilead and hearing of Esau's approach to meet him with a large force of retainers, he divides his household and possessions into two camps, hoping that in case the one is attacked by his brother the other will escape. **9.** But feeling that all these human precautions alone are insufficient, he turns to God in prayer, asking his protection and aid. The prayer (v. 9-12) reveals a spirit of trustful humility and acknowledgment of past blessings.

10. I am not worthy of the least of all (Heb., *I am less than all*) **the lovingkindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant**—

Though not expressed in definite words, this humble confession implies a confession of sin and wrongdoing in the past. **12. Make thy seed as the sand of the sea**—A promise first made to Abraham (Gen. 22. 17) and descending upon Jacob through the blessing of Isaac (Gen. 27. 27-29), and again repeated in the promise given to Jacob at Beth-el (Gen. 28. 14). Verses 13-21 refer to the present which Jacob sends in advance to his brother Esau by which he hopes to gain his favor.

22. The ford of the Jabbok—The Jabbok is a tributary emptying into the Jordan from the East, a little south of the Sea of Galilee, and about twenty-five miles north of the Jordan's mouth. The Jabbok, like the Jordan, flows for the greater part of its course through a deeply cut ravine with only here and there a place suitable for fording. The ford here referred to is probably one about three miles east of the Jordan. **24. There**

wrestled a man with him—Who this person really was the subsequent narrative shows. **25. The hollow of Jacob's thigh**—that is, the socket of the thigh bone was strained. **26. Except thou bless me**—The blessing takes the form of a change of name, the new name given being suggestive of victory and success. **28. No more Jacob, but Israel**—The change of name is significant of a change of character in the man himself. Jacob means literally *the crafty one, the overreacher*. Such a one he is to be no longer. Israel is here interpreted to mean *the perseverer with God*, and may mean also *the one who is worthy to prevail with God*. Such henceforth is to be the character of the patriarch. **29. He blessed him there**—Gave him the promise and assurance of his help and continued blessing. **30. Peniel**—Lit., *the face of God*. The exact location of Peniel (elsewhere called Penuel) is not certain, but it must have been near the ford mentioned above, and a little east of Jacob's next halting place, which according to Gen. 33. 17 was Succoth.

Application: Esau versus Jacob

By comparison and contrast the characters of these two men and the lessons which the portrayal of each is intended to teach will be brought out more clearly. Let us consider each briefly in turn: I. *Esau*.—A type of the sensual man. 1. Values lightly great spiritual blessings while under the influence of appetite. 2. Inconstant and changeable—now reckless, then repentant; now breathing murder, then falling upon the neck of his brother and kissing him. 3. A nature too shallow for good to take deep root, dull to perception of spiritual truth and spiritual distinctions. 4. On occasion trying to imitate goodness (Gen. 28. 8, 9). 5. Discounting religion and piety in others, though not possessing these himself. II. *Jacob*.—The character of Jacob appears in two different aspects, namely: 1. Before crossing the Jabbok. Up to this point the traits most prominent have been self-seeking, craft, unscrupulous designing, self-confidence, and self-sufficiency. That his character, even at this time, was stronger than that of Esau is evident from his appreciation of real values, his constancy and self-control, and his determination and steady effort to achieve a definite purpose. On the eve of re-entering the land of promise, we find him still the same, making wise provision for meeting his angry brother; but at this point he is mysteriously held back, and after a long night of futile struggle is made suddenly conscious of his utter helplessness and dependence on God. 2. After crossing the Jabbok. Changed in heart as well as in name, broken in spirit and in body, but purified in aspirations.

For Further Discussion

The benefit that comes from being vanquished. Is deep humility and a sense of utter dependence upon God compatible with strength of character? Did the subsequent life of Jacob indicate that a real change of character had taken place?

LESSON III.—April 21

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BROTHERS.—Gen. 37. 5-28

Read Gen. 37.

Memorize verses 26-28.

5. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. 6. And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: 7 for, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves came round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. 8. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words. 9. And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it to his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed yet a dream; and, behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars made obeisance to me. 10. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren; and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? 11. And his brethren envied him; but his father kept the saying in mind. 12. And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. 13. And Israel said unto Joseph, Are not thy brethren feeding the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. 14. And he said to him, Go now, see whether it is well with thy brethren, and well with the flock; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron and he came to Shechem. 15. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? 16. And he said, I am seeking my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they are feeding the flock. 17. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan. 18. And they saw him afar off, and before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. 19. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. 20. Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into one of the pits, and we will say, An evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams. 21. And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand, and said, Let us not take his life. 22. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood; cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but lay no hand upon him: that he might deliver him out of their hand, to restore him to his father. 23. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph of his coat, the coat of many colors that was on him; 24 and they took him, and cast him into the pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. 25. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it

down to Egypt. **26.** And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother and conceal his blood? **27.** Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother, our flesh. And his brethren hearkened unto him. **28.** And there passed by Midianites, merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Golden Text.—For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed.—James 3. 16.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joseph Sold by His Brethren, Gen. 37, 1–14. *T.* Joseph Sold by His Brethren, Gen. 37. 15–28. *W.* Jacob's grief, Gen. 37. 29–36. *Th.* Joseph a slave, Gen. 39. 1–6. *F.* Patience in suffering, Psa. 37. 1–11. *S.* Evil works, Gal. 5. 13–26. *S.* Evil speaking, James 4. 5–12.

Introduction: The Story of Joseph

For the next four lessons we are to study the life story of Joseph. In point of literary excellence, beauty of style, and charm this story is one of the best in all literature. Joseph is one of the twelve sons of Jacob and the firstborn son of Rachel, and therefore the favorite of his father. This preference of the father for Joseph brings upon the latter the envy of his older brothers. This envy is augmented and turned into positive hatred by the fact that Joseph in successive dreams sees himself their superior, and even their lord, in later life. They seek, therefore, to get rid of their brother, and finally sell him into slavery. The subsequent narrative of Joseph's prosperity is intended to show how even the wickedness of men is not able to interfere with the carrying out of God's purpose in an individual life and in the life of a nation.

Explanation: A Textual Study

5. Verses 5–11 record the two boyish dreams of future greatness, which, when Joseph relates them to his brothers, naturally increase their dislike for him. In our lesson narrative they are presented as divinely sent presentiments of Joseph's future greatness. The fact that there were two dreams of similar import indicates the certainty of the fulfillment. (Comp. Gen. 41. 32.) **12. Shechem**—The ancient Hebrew city situated in the sheltered valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, about twelve miles north of Jerusalem and not far from Beth-el. The narrow valley is most fertile, and the field beyond in either direction furnished rich pasture lands. The town is also called Sychar (John 4. 5). The name of the present town occupying the same site is Nablus, a corruption of Neapolis. **14. Vale of Hebron**—Hebron is the oldest town in Palestine, and one of the most ancient cities of the world. It lies south of Jerusalem and about equal distance between the

ancient capital and Beer-sheba. It was called also Kirjath-arba (Gen. 23. 2; Josh. 14. 15) and Mamre (Gen. 13. 18; 35. 27). Its present name is el-Khulil.

17. Dothan—An upland plain about eleven miles north of Samaria, noted for its excellent pastures, and located on the direct caravan route from Syria to Egypt.

21. Reuben—The oldest of Jacob's twelve sons. These in order of their age were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. Of these twelve, Joseph and Benjamin were sons of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife.

22. Into this pit—Probably a cistern for the storage of rain water. Such cisterns are common in Palestine, and two such pits, or cisterns, are still to be seen at Dothan. They have sloping sides, and are about ten feet deep. One of these is called by the Arabs "Jubb Yusuf," *The pit of Joseph*.

25. Ishmaelites—Descendants of Ishmael, and hence kinsmen of Jacob's family.

Gilead—East

of the Jordan valley and the Sea of Galilee.

Spicery—

Probably some one definite kind of resinous gum.

Myrrh—A fragrant gum of the *cistus*, or rock-rose. These gums were used in Egypt partly for medical purposes, partly for incense, and partly in embalming.

28. Midianites—Merchantmen. Not to be identified with the Ishmaelites, as the reading of the narrative would seem to indicate. The use of the two distinct names seems to point to an interweaving of two different accounts of the same event, from which the Genesis narrator drew his information, one of these events mentioning the Ishmaelites as the people to whom Joseph was sold, and the other mentioning the Midianites.

Twenty pieces of silver—Lit., *twenty shekels*. The Hebrew shekel being worth about sixty cents in our money, the amount received for Joseph by his brethren was twelve dollars. This was about two thirds of the ordinary price of an adult slave at that time.

Application: Behold This Dreamer

I. *When Dreams Are Important.*—1. When they are the concentrated essence of waking thoughts and pictur-esqueley exhibit man's real character. 2. When, unimpeded by social restraints and external considerations of our conscious hours, our vanity, pride, malice, or passion is permitted to run to results, if thereby we are startled into a realization of the wickedness and wrong of our lurking desire or purpose, and turn from it. "The evil thought we have suffered to creep about our heart seems in our dreams to become a deed, and we wake in horror and thank God we can yet refrain." 3. When dreams give rise to nobler aspirations or forecast the possibility of a more useful life.

II. *Misunderstood Dreamers.*—People whose religious experience rises above the measure of our own are not seldom looked upon by us as visionaries, enthusiasts, and dreamers. Thus Joseph's inner soul life was misunderstood by the Esau-like, good-natured Reuben, the fierce and fanatical Simeon and Levi, the servile and patient Issachar, the strong and dignified Judah.

III. *Disposing of the Dreamer.*—1. Cast into the pit. Like Joseph, many

another, while seeking to be useful, is disowned and outcast. 2. Sold into slavery. Talents not recognized are forced into the necessity of earning a scanty subsistence among strangers and in uncongenial surroundings.

IV. *The Dreamer's Discipline*.—1. He learns that there is no easy and short path to success. 2. He is humbled by the actual experience he meets in ordinary life. 3. He learns that humility and service, which come of the ambition that seeks great things, but not for self, are the qualities really indispensable. Under pressure, if it break not, a life develops its noblest traits.

For Further Discussion

Reuben-like characters in modern life: Always out of the way when most needed. Occupied with private business when a real service to another might be rendered. "On the other side of the hill when Christ's cause is being betrayed." The Golden Text and its application to our lesson.

LESSON IV.—April 28

JOSEPH FAITHFUL IN PRISON.—Gen. 39. 20 to 40. 15

Read Gen. 39 and 40.

Memorize verses 21, 22

20. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were bound; and he was there in the prison. 21. But Jehovah was with Joseph, and showed kindness unto him, and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23. The keeper of the prison looked not to anything that was under his hand, because Jehovah was with him; and that which he did, Jehovah made it to prosper. 1. And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker offended their lord the king of Egypt. 2. And Pharaoh was wroth against his two officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. 3. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. 4. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he ministered unto them: and they continued a season in ward. 5. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream, in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were bound in the prison. 6. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and saw them, and, behold, they were sad. 7. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in ward in his master's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sad to-day? 8. And they said unto him, We have dreamed

a dream, and there is none that can interpret it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell it me, I pray you. **9.** And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; **10** and in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, *and* its blossoms shot forth; *and* the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: **11** and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. **12.** And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; **13** within yet three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head, and restore thee unto thine office: and thou shalt give Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. **14.** But have me in thy remembrance when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: **15** for indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

Golden Text.—Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.—Rev. 2. 10.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joseph Faithful in Prison, Gen. 39. 20 to 40. 15. *T.* Joseph forgotten, Gen. 40. 16-23. *W.* Daniel's faithfulness, Dan. 6. 4-11. *Th.* Comfort in suffering, 1 Pet. 4. 12-19. *F.* Prayer in adversity, Psa. 31. 13-24. *S.* Endurance in persecution, Matt. 10. 21-32. *S.* Reward of faithfulness, Rev. 2. 8-11.

Introduction: A Relentless Vengeance

Even old age did not shield Jacob from cruel craftiness such as in his younger days he had himself practiced on others. The treatment he had received at the hands of Laban was not to be the measure of vengeance heaped upon him for the misdeeds of his earlier life. The falsehood and deception of his son, leading him to believe Joseph dead, was wholly successful, and for many years he was permitted, in addition to other griefs which bowed him down, to mourn the loss of his favorite son also. Yet in the providence of God even this cloud had a silver lining, which he was to discover before the sunset of his life. For us the lesson of Jacob's life is expressed in part in the words, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord," coupled with that other thought so prominent throughout this narrative, of God's overruling providence which in the end makes even the wickedness and wrath of men to praise him.

Explanation: A Textual Study

20. Arriving in Egypt, Joseph was forced to pass through a series of severe tests of character. His fidelity to God in the first hour of great temptation did not result in immediate honor and preferment to him, but instead he is thrown into prison. **Joseph's master**—Potiphar,

an Egyptian officer and captain of the king's bodyguard. **King's prisoners**—Prisoners of high rank. **21. Gave him favor in the sight of**—Brought him into favor with. **1. Butler**—Lit., *cupbearer*. (Comp. Neh. 1, 11.) Verses 9–11 throw some light on the duties of this officer. The office of cupbearer to the king could be held only by persons of high rank, the office itself being one of the highest in the gift of the king. **8. None that can interpret it**—The Egyptians, like most ancient nations, regarded all dreams as significant, and attached great importance to their interpretation. **9.** In this and the three succeeding verses is recorded the butler's dream, in which he sees himself reinstated at court and performing the functions of his former office. **13. Pharaoh**—A title common to Egyptian monarchs of that early period. Which of the Pharaohs is referred to is not certain. "There are, however," as Driver points out, "strong reasons for supposing Ramses II, of the 19th dynasty (B. C. 1348–1281, Sayce), to be the Pharaoh of the Oppression; and, reckoning back from this *datum*, it is probable that Joseph's elevation in Egypt is to be placed under one of the later Hyksos kings." The Hyksos invaded Egypt from Asia about 2000 B. C. Conquering the then existing dynasty, they ruled Egypt for nearly five centuries, being finally expelled 1600 B. C. While their policy at first was that of devastation and destruction, they soon settled down and assimilated much of the culture of the conquered Egyptians.

Application: A Pearl in the Making

I. The Auricula Margaritifera.—In the life of this little denizen of the ocean it sometimes occurs that a foreign particle, or element, intrudes between the shell coverings into the soft and delicate portions of the animal's body, causing great irritation, and even threatening life. But undismayed, as it were, the little creature as once begins with ceaseless activity, night and day, to build a covering over the intruding foreign particle to protect itself and preserve its life. The result of this enforced activity far exceeds the intended purpose. Not only is the little life preserved and permitted to run its natural course, but a precious pearl, destined to serve a purpose far outreaching the life of the little creature which was its builder, results from this struggle for existence. **II. The Pearl of Character.**—**1.** Takes shape and form in adversity, the product of life's struggle and conflict. Thus Joseph's character grew during his enforced imprisonment. While there he (*a*) acquired the ability to rule over others, having first won the confidence of his superiors and associates; (*b*) gained the knowledge which later was to be of inestimable value to him—from his association with prisoners of high rank he doubtless learned much concerning Pharaoh and his royal court, the form and method of his government, the character and ability of his advisers, the extent and needs of his vast kingdom; (*c*) became cosmopolitan in spirit, charitable toward foreigners, a lover of all men; (*d*) acquired the command of self and developed courage;

(e) lived close to God and learned to recognize his voice.
2. A slow process, and one the outcome of which is sometimes not apparent.

For Further Discussion

Joseph's watchword in temptation (Gen. 39. 9). Other watchwords for times of temptation from the Old and New Testament. Christ, the interpreter of our dim anticipations of good and evil. What desirable traits of character are attainable only under great stress and adversity?

LESSON V.—May 5

JOSEPH THE WISE RULER IN EGYPT.—Gen. 41. 38-49

Read Gen. 41-43.

Memorize verses 38-40.

38. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is? 39. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou: 40 thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. 41. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. 42. And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; 43 and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt. 45. And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-phera priest of On. And Joseph went out over the land of Egypt. 46. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47. And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls. 48. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. 49. And Joseph laid up grain as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left off numbering; for it was without number.

Golden Text.—If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God.—James 1. 5.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joseph remembered, Gen. 41. 1-13. *T.* Pharaoh's dream, Gen. 41. 14-24. *W.*

Joseph's interpretation, Gen. 41. 25-37. *Th.* Joseph the Wise Ruler in Egypt, Gen. 31. 38-49. *F.* Sent before, Psa. 105. 5-22. *S.* The Lord exalteth, 1 Sam. 2. 1-10. **S.** A mighty Helper, Psa. 37. 25-40.

Introduction: Intervening Events

The dream of the captive baker proved less favorable than that of his fellow prisoner, the cupbearer. Joseph's interpretation of each dream, however, was vindicated by its literal fulfillment. Upon his return to his place of honor at the royal mansion the cupbearer forgets his promise to Joseph, and two years more of life in prison are the latter's portion. At the end of this time Joseph is rescued from servitude in consequence of his interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh himself, and is invested with authority over all Egypt, that his wisdom may direct the preparations of the nation against the coming years of famine.

Explanation: A Textual Study

38. Pharaoh said—The words of Pharaoh are in response to Joseph's recommendation that he find a man of wisdom to superintend the ingathering of harvests during the years of plenty foretold in the dream as a provision against the suffering in the years of famine which are to follow. **40. Be ruled**—Lit., *order themselves, or do homage.* **41.** The office given Joseph from this description appears to have been that of governor over the whole land. This officer was called by the Egyptians *T'a-te*. **42. His signet ring**—A badge of authority, especially considered so in Egypt. **Fine linén**—Or *cotton*. The best cloth made, such as was worn by persons of rank. **43. Chariot**—There are few Egyptian monuments extant which date from the period of the Hyksos, but the monuments remaining from subsequent dynasties, from the 18th onward, are rich in decorations, among which the representation of the chariot is frequently found. **45. Called Joseph's name Zaphenath-paneah**—Lit., *God spake and he came into life.* Egyptian monuments of a later period supply many illustrations of foreigners rising to positions of high importance in Egypt and adopting at such times a change of name. **Poti-phera**—The fuller name of Potiphar. **Priest of On**—The city of On was seven miles northeast of the modern Cairo. It was the ancient center of sun-worship in Egypt, and is the same city which the Greeks called Heliopolis. The high priest of the great temple to the god Ra at this place was a most important and highly honored dignitary. **47. Seven plenteous years**—Alternating periods of abundance and famine due to the irregularity in the overflow of the Nile were not uncommon in Egypt. Sometimes the period of abundance or of famine, as the case might be, actually lasted for many years. Thus the successive years 1064-1071 A. D. were years of famine, as Egyptian records show. Monumental inscriptions found in Egypt also corroborate our Bible story of the method in which provision was made during years of plenty for the famine which might be expected to follow.

Application: Joseph the Statesman

I. His Qualifications.—1. Natural Ability. 2. Faithfulness which had been tested in smaller fields. 3. Foresight. 4. Disinterestedness—seeking the good of the whole people. 5. Promptness and industry. 6. Spiritual insight and the fear of God. **II. His Achievements**—1. Saved the people from destruction by famine. 2. Extended the commercial influence and foreign trade of Egypt. 3. Placed the revenues of the government on a sound, economic basis. 4. Unified and consolidated the Egyptian state, making of it a stronger nation. **III. His Rewards**.—1. These consisted primarily in his achievements, since to achieve success in life is its own greatest reward. 2. Among the incidental rewards which came to Joseph were honor, wealth, power, and long life. 3. Other higher rewards included the larger opportunity and field for usefulness, the joy and peace that come from devotion to a high purpose and to the service of God.

For Further Discussion

In what respects is Joseph worthy of emulation in our day? What seems to be the most important lesson of his life for us? Does good always come from evil in our lives, as it seems to have in the life of Joseph? If God overrules the action of men for good, why is effort on their part to achieve the good necessary?

LESSON VI.—May 12

JOSEPH FORGIVES HIS BROTHERS.—Gen. 45. 1–15; 50. 15–21

Read Gen. 44–50.

Memorize verses 4, 5.

1. Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. 2. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians heard, and the house of Pharaoh heard. 3. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. 4. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. 5. And now be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. 6. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and there are yet five years, in which there shall be neither plowing nor harvest. 7. And God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth, and to save you alive by a great deliverance. 8. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and ruler over all the

land of Egypt. **9.** Haste ye and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not; **10** and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks and thy herds, and all that thou hast: **11** and there will I nourish thee; for there are yet five years of famine; lest thou come to poverty, thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast. **12.** And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. **13.** And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen: and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. **14.** And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. **15.** And he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him. **15.** And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, It may be that Joseph will hate us, and will fully requite us all the evil which we did unto him. **16.** And they sent a message unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, **17.** So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil. And now, we pray thee, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. **18.** And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we are thy servants. **19.** And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? **20.** And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. **21.** Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

Golden Text.—Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.—Eph. 4. 32.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Seeking food, Gen. 42. 1-20. *T.* The second journey, Gen. 43. 1-14. *W.* Fears dispelled, Gen. 43. 15-34. *Th.* A sorrowful return, Gen. 44. 1-17. *F.* Judah's appeal, Gen. 44. 18-34. *S.* Joseph Forgives His Brothers, Gen. 45. 1-15. *S.* Joseph Forgives His Brothers, Gen. 50. 15-21.

Introduction: The Longer Narrative

In the selection of the verses which form the text of our present lesson, the plan of the whole series of lessons for the quarter and for the year also is evident, namely: the study of longer passages of the biblical narrative with the shorter passages, forming the separate lesson texts, as a nucleus, or basis for discussion, of the larger passage. In this lesson we are really to study the whole of chapters 44-50 inclusive.

The famine which finally came upon Egypt in fulfillment of Pharaoh's dream as interpreted by Joseph was felt also in the land of Palestine to the northeast. Its long duration finally compelled Jacob to send his sons into Egypt to buy corn. They are recognized by Joseph, who puts them to a severe test of their character; and finally, after many months, at the time of their second visit in Egypt, having convinced himself that they are not the same envying, hating men they once were, and prompted by a yearning desire to once more see his father Jacob, makes himself known unto them.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. We now come to the climax of the whole story of Joseph. Could not refrain himself—This he had done during many months, probably more than a year which had elapsed since the first visit of his brethren to Egypt to buy food. During all this time he had been testing them before revealing his identity to them.

2. Wept—Lit., *gave forth his voice in weeping*. **3. I am Joseph**—The decisive word and the turning point of the narrative. **Doth my father yet live?**—A challenge, as it were, to his brethren to verify their statement made to this effect at a previous interview. (Comp. Gen. 43. 27.) **Troubled at his presence**—As well they might be, now that the discovery of their once-despised brother, clothed with power and authority, called to their remembrance all that had transpired in the years long past—his dreams, their envy and cruelty, his pleading, their relentlessness, their father's sorrow, and the ever-returning compunctions of a guilty conscience which had followed them through these years.

6. Yet five years—The first visit of Joseph's brethren to Egypt must, therefore, have occurred very soon after the famine had set in, two years earlier.

7. A remnant—Descendants. **By a great deliverance**—Or, *to be a great company that escaped*.

8. A father to Pharaoh—A figurative expression, meaning a beneficent adviser and wise administrator.

10. The land of Goshen—On the fertile delta of the Nile, where was to be found the richest pasture land in all Egypt.

12. Benjamin—The only full brother of Joseph, as well as the youngest of the twelve sons of Jacob.

14. Fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck—Having now disclosed to them his identity and convinced them beyond a possible doubt that he was indeed their brother, he now proceeds to greet them in true Oriental manner, full of demonstrative affection.

15. After that his brethren talked with him—Set at rest temporarily at least by his evident good will and sincere cordiality. The invitation of Joseph to his father to come to Egypt to live is seconded by a cordial invitation from Pharaoh himself. The return of Joseph's brethren to their father, and Jacob's joy at hearing that his son Joseph was still living, the transfer of Jacob's household to Egypt, his welcome at the hands of Joseph and of Pharaoh, his last days spent in peace and happiness among his children, his prophecy concerning his sons, his death and burial in the field of Machpelah, all belong to our lesson, and are recorded in

the chapters and verses intervening between the portions selected for our lesson text.

50. 15. It may be that Joseph will hate us—The guilty conscience of Joseph's brethren once more asserts itself, but underneath their desire to escape a possible vengeance at his hand we discover from a careful reading of the narrative a longing on their part to be forgiven and to be actually and fully reconciled to him against whom they had so grievously sinned.

17. Forgive—The first occurrence of the word or its equivalent in the Bible.

Forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of thy father—Words which seem to reveal a true sense of sin.

19. The humility and magnanimity shown by Joseph is a further proof of the true greatness of his character. It is worth while to remember that Joseph was about thirty-nine years old when his father came to Egypt; that he lived to be one hundred and ten years old and died in 1635 B. C. (approximately), seventy years after the settling of his father and brethren in Egypt; and that after his death he was embalmed and many years later buried at Shechem.

Application: Concerning Reconciliations

I. Contributing Elements.—1. A common interest, adversity or sorrow—privation, death—making tender the hearts and permitting the nobler instincts to dominate in life and action. 2. Magnanimity and humility on the part of the superior or aggrieved party. 3. A sense of the brotherhood of men, of the limitations and incompleteness of an isolated individual life and consequently of its dependence upon others, and a resulting interest in the welfare of others.

II. Obstacles.—Among the obstacles in the way of reconciliations, otherwise possible, we note, in general: selfishness, pride, and a haughty spirit, envy and jealousy, misunderstanding, and resulting from these an unwillingness to admit a fault or to compromise. These obstacles may exist in the heart of one or both of the estranged persons or parties, and if permitted to remain even in one heart they make complete reconciliation impossible.

III. Examples.—1. Esau and Jacob (Gen. 33. 4, 11). 2. Joseph and his brethren. 3. Pilate and Herod (Luke 23. 12).

IV. Man's Reconciliation to God.—1. Made possible on God's side by his great love for erring mankind (John 3. 16). 2. Necessary prerequisites on the part of man: repentance and faith (Rom. 5. 1, 10). 3. Accomplished through and in Christ. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. 5. 19). Other references: Eph. 2. 15; Col. 1. 20; Heb. 2. 17.

For Further Discussion

Compare and contrast the character of Joseph with that of Jacob; with that of Isaac; with that of Abraham. What was the one great outstanding character trait of each of these men? What light, if any, does the Bible narrative throw on the character of each of Joseph's brethren?

ISRAEL ENSLAVED IN EGYPT.—Exod. 1. 1-14

Read Exod. 1.

Memorize verses 13, 14.

1. Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, who came into Egypt (every man and his household came with Jacob): 2. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, 3. Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, 4. Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher. 5. And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: and Joseph was in Egypt already. 6. And Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation. 7. And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. 8. Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph. 9. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: 10 come, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they also join themselves unto our enemies, and fight against us, and get them up out of the land. 11. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Raamses. 12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. 13. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: 14 and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field, all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor.

Golden Text.—Then they cried unto Jehovah in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses.—Psa. 107. 13.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The journey to Egypt, Gen. 46. 1-7, 26-30. *T.* The home in Egypt, Gen. 47. 1-12. *W.* The death of Joseph, Gen. 50. 22-26. *Th.* Israel enslaved in Egypt, Exod. 1. 1-14. *F.* Stephen's address, Acts 7. 1-16. *S.* Prayer for deliverance, Psa. 143. *S.* Without cause, Isa. 52. 1-6.

Introduction: The Birth of a Nation

The vital difference between the books of Genesis and Exodus is a difference of subject in their narrative content. The stories in the book of Genesis were concerned with individuals and families, but in Exodus the narrative has a broader theme and becomes the history of a nation. In Genesis, nations, such as the Canaanites and Egyptians, are mentioned only as they affect the lives of the patriarchs, the forefathers of this people. Born in adversity and reared during its earlier generations in servitude, this nation, this peculiar people, is nevertheless seen to be under the protecting and guiding providence

of Jehovah, and the narrative of Exodus does not proceed far before we discover the high purpose which God has for Israel.

Explanation: A Textual Study

Verses 1-7 record the fulfillment of the promise to Jacob, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation" (Gen. 46. 3). **2.** The names of Jacob's sons are here given according to the rank of their mothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun being sons of Leah, the first wife of Jacob; Benjamin, with Joseph, being sons of Rachel; Dan and Naphtali, Gad and Asher, the sons of Bilhah and of Zilpah, the handmaids of Rachel and Leah, respectively. **5. Seventy souls**—The children and grandchildren of Jacob.

7. Increased abundantly—At the time of the exodus, several hundred years later, the nation and its adherents numbered about six hundred thousand. **8. A new king**—A new dynasty, that is, a change in the royal or ruling house, took place. The new dynasty was doubtless not interested in, and probably radically opposed to, anything and everything which savored of the policy of the old. **9. More and mightier than we**—Lit., *too many and too mighty for us*—the word of despotic fear.

10. Let us deal wisely with them—Or, *be more cunning*—the word of despotic craftiness. The real danger to the country grew out of the fact that the Israelites did not become Egyptianized. How strong the sense of nationality and the patriarchal traditions were in the Jews is shown by the fact that even the descendants of Joseph, who had an Egyptian mother, became Jews. The wiser and more honorable policy for the Egyptian rulers would doubtless have been to help the Jews to secure a foreign dwelling place. **11. Taskmasters to afflict them**—The Egyptian monuments in their inscriptions and pictorial representations vividly set forth the oppression inflicted upon the subject Jews during this period. **Store-cities**—Cities in which the surplus of grain was stored in times of plenty. **Pithom**

—Situated on a canal leading from the Nile to the Arabian Gulf, called by the Greeks Heliopolis. A city long lost, but some years ago rediscovered and definitely identified. **Raamses**—Or, *Rameses*, named after Ramses II, and located in Goshen, on the Delta. The city from which the Israelites started at the time of the exodus. **12. Were grieved because of**—Lit., *abhorred*.

14. Service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field—The bricks were hardened in the hot Egyptian sun; the field labor consisted principally in the hard work of irrigating the soil; both forms of work, when insisted upon **with rigor**, were, under the trying climatic conditions, an extreme test of human powers of endurance.

Application: In Compensation

I. For Israel's Slavery.—**1.** The nation became set apart and, as probably under no other conditions, a peculiar people. The haughty Egyptians, at least under

the new dynasty, would scorn intermarriage with a subject people, whereas the Canaanites in Palestine, as the experience of the patriarchs had already shown, would have earnestly solicited the establishment of such intimate ties of relationship. "Here the very contempt in which they were held proved to be their most valuable bulwark." 2. By contact with the more advanced civilization of Egypt, the descendants of Jacob emerged from the semi-barbarous condition in which they had been previously living. The race of shepherds became an agricultural people. 3. In Egypt, also, the Jews learned more fully to appreciate the sacredness of human life and of laws. What Rome later was to its conquered races in this respect, that Egypt was to Israel. II. *For Our Heartache and Sorrow.*—1. A realization of guilt. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, therefore is this distress come upon us" (Gen. 42. 21; comp. also Exod. 10. 7-17; Num. 21. 7). 2. Affliction teaches us to pray (Isa. 26. 16; Jonah 2. 7). 3. Leads us to repentance (Job 34. 31). 4. Makes us conscious of God's power and willingness to help (2 Chron. 15. 4; Psa. 18. 6). III. *For the Restrictions and Limitations Imposed upon Us by the Discipline of Home and of the Church.*—1. A truer and greater freedom. The prodigal son in seeking to rid himself of these limitations, and to escape this discipline, became a slave. 2. A broader and fuller life. The man who catches the vision which Christ had of life and its possibilities of service will, like Moses, choose rather to suffer much than to enjoy the pleasures of the world, which he realizes can endure but for a season. Not the Christian, but the man of the world, leads the narrow and incomplete life.

For Further Discussion

The freedom that leads to slavery. Restrictions that lead to liberty. Manners and customs of the early Egyptians. The religion of Egypt. What are some of the benefits not mentioned in our applications which the sojourn of the Jews in Egypt brought to their nation?

LESSON VIII.—May 26

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION OF MOSES.— Exod. 2. 1-15

Read Exod. 2.

Memorize verses 9, 10.

1. And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. 2. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. 3. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the flags by the river's brink. 4. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. 5. And the

daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and she saw the ark among the flags, and sent her handmaid to fetch it. 6. And she opened it, and saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. 7. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? 8. And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. 10. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and said, Because I drew him out of the water. 11. And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown up, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he saw an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he smote the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand. 13. And he went out the second day, and, behold, two men of the Hebrews were striving together: and he said to him that did the wrong. Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? 14. And he said, Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? thinkest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely the thing is known. 15. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

Golden Text.—Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works.—Acts. 7. 22.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Childhood and Education of Moses, Exod. 2. 1–15. *T.* The hard bondage, Exod. 2. 16–25. *W.* Learned and mighty, Acts 7. 17–29. *Th.* The choice, Heb. 11. 21–27. *F.* Royal nursing, Isa. 49. 18–23. *S.* The best choice, Psa. 84. *S.* The best knowledge, 2 Tim. 3. 10–17.

Introduction: Human Agencies

The book of Exodus, as our last lesson showed, opens on a scene of oppression very different from the prosperity and triumph with which the book of Genesis had closed. Israel, now become a great people, is being cruelly crushed by the new dynasty which has arisen in Egypt. But, as the name of the book, Exodus, signifies, the story to be narrated in its chapters is the story of Israel's redemption. Two points will be made clear in the course of the narrative. The first is that ultimately it is Israel's God that is her Redeemer; the other point emphasized is the fact that God in redeeming Israel from bondage operates largely by human means. The first step in this history of deliverance is the preparation of

a deliverer, Moses, whose parentage, early training, and fearless love of justice mark him as God's chosen instrument for carrying out his great purpose. To the story of the childhood and education of this great leader of the Exodus we turn our attention in to-day's lesson.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Went . . . and took—The intended sense is that of our past perfect tense, *had gone . . . and taken*, the Hebrew language being deficient in tense forms to express differences in time. **The house of Levi**—Now become a numerous tribe. **Daughter**—In the sense of *descendant*. **2. A son**—Not her first child, both Miriam and Aaron being older. **3. Ark**—Casket. **Bulrushes**—Papyrus, a reed cultivated extensively in the delta of the Nile in ancient times, though no longer found in its ancient home, but only in Abyssinia, Nubia, and various parts of Sicily. It was put to many uses, its roots, stalks, juice, fiber, and pith all being valuable. Light skiffs suitable for navigating the shallows of the Nile were made from its stalks. **Slime**—That is, *bitumen*. **Flags**—Flowering rushes not identical with papyrus reeds. **4. His sister**—Miriam, now about thirteen or fourteen years old. **The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river**—Quite in harmony with ancient Egyptian custom. **6. Had compassion on him**—Her true womanly nature exerted itself. **7, 8. A nurse of the Hebrew women . . . the child's mother**—Doubtless the princess suspected the relationship between the child and the woman, but as Lange points out, "How often, in cases of such national hostilities, the feelings of individual women are those of general humanity in contradiction to those of the great mass of fanatical women." **10. Moses**—Heb., *Mosheh*, explained in the following clause, **drew him out**. **11. Went out unto his brethren**—Thus doubtless intentionally, quitting the royal court forever. **An Egyptian smiting a Hebrew**—Probably one of the subordinate taskmasters set over the Hebrews. **12. Smote the Egyptian**—A wrongful act, the outcome of an ardent but undisciplined spirit. **14. Moses feared**—That the sympathies of his nation were not with him was evident from what had transpired. **15. Midian**—A land so called after its inhabitants, the descendants of Midian, a son of Abraham. (Comp. Gen. 25. 1-4.) The Midianites were in reality nomads who moved from place to place. The exact region to which Moses fled is therefore not certain. Probably somewhere to the south or southwest of the Dead Sea, the hill country of Seir.

Application: Possibilities of Training

I. Limitations.—Training depends partly on environment and formal discipline, and partly on natural or inherited traits. Natural capacity is always inherited and limits the possibilities of training. Thus men inherit a capacity for leadership, for music, for the management of affairs, etc., etc. In general it may be said that, while

all specific knowledge and skill in execution must come from training, training cannot give any general ability or capacity. II. *Importance of Early Years.*—Youth is the habit-forming period of life, the period of memory. This fact gives to the training of the child its great importance. Moses in his early youth was reared in an atmosphere of religious faith, of national traditions and prejudices, of family ties of love and reverence, and in later life he never escaped from the influence of this earliest training. III. *Later Environment.*—The environment in which Moses lived after becoming the adopted son of the Egyptian princess contributed much to the development of his natural capacity for leadership, and fitted him specially for the great lifework to which he was subsequently to be called.

For Further Discussion

What lessons of importance to Christian educators do the possibilities of early training suggest? To what extent is a man necessarily, and to what extent may he become, the creature of his environment?

LESSON IX.—June 2

MOSES CALLED TO DELIVER ISRAEL.—Exod. 3. 1-14

Read Exod. 3-6.

Memorize verses 2-4.

1. Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. 2. And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. 3. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4. And when Jehovah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. 5. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. 6. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God. 7. And Jehovah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; 8 and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 9. And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I

have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. **10.** Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. **11.** And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? **12.** And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. **13.** And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? **14.** And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Golden Text.—And he said, Certainly I will be with thee.—Exod. 3. 12.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—**M.** Moses Called to Deliver Israel, Exod. 3. 1–14. **T.** The message, Exod. 3. 15–22. **W.** The signs, Exod. 4. 1–12. **Th.** The request refused, Exod. 5. 1–14. **F.** God's promise, Exod. 6. 1–13. **S.** God's presence, Jer. 1. 11–19. **S.** "Send me!" Isa. 6. 1–8.

Introduction: A Definite Mission

Whatever hopes Moses may have entertained in youth and early manhood of some day delivering his people, they had long since, doubtless, been abandoned. The years of desert seclusion, leading the life of a shepherd, had, moreover, made him "slow of speech and of a slow tongue," and unused to the ways of men in the daily intercourse of crowded city and kingly court. Yet this long period of seclusion had afforded opportunity for meditation, and for spiritual communion with God, and had brought, doubtless, the calm serenity and poise of character quite as essential to successful leadership as the other more external qualities just referred to. Nor was the earlier training which Moses had received in Egypt wholly obliterated during these years of seclusion. Jehovah himself had been preparing him in his own way from earliest childhood for the great mission to which he now called him in the way indicated in our lesson narrative.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Moses was keeping the flock—Had, indeed, been living this shepherd life in Midian for forty years. **Jethro**—Called in verse 18 of the preceding chapter *Reuel*. **His father-in-law**—For the story of Moses's marriage, see verses 16–22 of the preceding chapter. **The priest of Midian**—The Midianites, as we saw in our last lesson, were a kindred race to the Hebrews, and hence their religion also was in all probability the same at this time. **The mountain of God, . . . Horeb**—Mount Sinai, the exact location of which is uncertain.

The traditional mount is near the southern point of the Arabian peninsula, though some scholars think that the mountain referred to is to be sought for rather farther to the northeast, in the hill country of Seir. **2. In a flame of fire**—That is, as light and consuming energy. It is to be noted that fire purifies what it does not consume. **4. Moses, Moses**—An expression of earnest warning and of the deepest sense of the sacredness and danger of the moment. **5. Put off thy shoes**—This act must in general have the same significance as the washing of the feet, and was an expression both of reverence and, symbolically, of the removal from one of "the moral impurity which through one's walk in life clings to the shoes or feet." **Holy ground**—Holy because of Jehovah's presence. **6. And Moses hid his face**—A voluntary expression of the heart in addition to the compliance with the two commands preceding. **8. Canaanite, Hittite, Amorite, Perizzite, Hivite, Jebusite**—A group of peoples, or tribes, which were settled in Palestine and vicinity before and at the time of the Israelitish immigration into that country. **11. Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?**—The years of seclusion had brought with them a spirit of true humility quite different from the impulsiveness and ardent spirit of Moses in his earlier years. (Comp. Exod. 2. 11-13.) **14. I am that I am**—That is, the Unchangeable One, who in the future, and from future to future, will be the same; the faithful, covenant-keeping God, and as such radically different from the everchanging representations of deity among the heathen.

Application: A Self-revealing God

I. The Revelation to Moses.—Some of the attributes of God made clear in his revelation of himself to Moses were: 1. His holiness. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground," (v. 5); "Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?" (Exod. 15. 11.) 2. His wisdom and justice (v. 7, 9). "He knoweth the way that I take" (Job 23. 10); "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18. 25.) 3. His love and compassion. "I know their sorrow" (v. 7); "The cry of the children of Israel is come unto me" (v. 9). 4. His power. "I am come down to deliver them" (v. 8); "Able to do exceedingly abundantly" (Eph. 3. 20). 5. His faithfulness. "Ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (v. 12)—"Israel encamped before the mount" (Exod. 19. 2); "Not one thing hath failed" (Josh. 23. 14). **II. The Revelation to Mankind.**—1. In nature. "The heavens declare the glory of God" (Psa. 19. 1). 2. In his word. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (John 5. 39). 3. In Christ. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14. 9). 4. In the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. Convicting men of sin (John 16. 9); guiding into truth (John 16. 13).

For Further Discussion

The fitness of Moses to be God's instrument in delivering Israel. Give the gist of the subsequent narrative contained in this and the following chapters. How long had it been since the last recorded miracle had been performed by God? The purpose and the value of the supernatural in the Old Testament. How does God reveal himself to the individual soul to-day? Are men still definitely called of God for definite work? Give examples.

LESSON X—June 9

THE PASSOVER.—Exod. 12. 21-30

Read Exod. 7-12.

Memorize verses 26, 27.

21. Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover. **22.** And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. **23.** For Jehovah will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, Jehovah will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. **24.** And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. **25.** And it shall come to pass, when ye are come to the land which Jehovah will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. **26.** And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? **27** that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshiped. **28.** And the children of Israel went and did so; as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they. **29.** And it came to pass at midnight, that Jehovah smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. **30.** And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

Golden Text.—When I see the blood, I will pass over you.—Exod. 12. 13.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The plagues, Psa. 105. 23-38. *T.* A memorial, Exod. 12. 1-14. *W.* The Passover,

Exod. 12. 21-30. *Th.* Deliverance, Exod. 12. 31-39. *F.* Great gladness, 2 Chron. 30. 13-23. *S.* Observed by Jesus, Luke 22. 7-20. *S.* "The precious blood," 1 Pet. 1. 13-21.

Introduction: A Titanic Struggle

Moses was called of God to perform a difficult task. God gave him a helper in his brother Aaron, who was to act as spokesman in their interviews with Pharaoh. In Moses we see the champion of justice; in Pharaoh, the incarnation of selfish worldly power. A titanic struggle results, but Israel's God is on the side of justice, and blow after blow falls upon the obstinate Pharaoh and his unhappy land: the Nile is turned into blood (chap. 7); plagues, frogs, gnats, gadflies, murrain, boils, hail, locusts, and darkness follow each other in quick succession (chap. 8-10). But all of no avail. The heart of Pharaoh remains hardened until—last and most terrible of all—the final blow falls, the smiting of the firstborn. In connection with this last and severest punishment comes the institution of the passover, to which we devote our attention in the present lesson. Then Pharaoh yielded and permitted Israel to go forth; the festival of unleavened bread was ordained for a perpetual memorial (chap. 11, 12); also the firstborn of man and beast was consecrated (chap. 13. 1-16).

Explanation: A Textual Study

21. The elders of Israel—The heads of family groups and tribes. **Lambs**—Or, *kids*. **Kill the passover**—That is, the passover lamb. **22. Hyssop**—A pungent, aromatic plant with straight, slender, leafy stalks, with small flowering heads. **Lintel**—The upper horizontal beam of the door frame. **24.** The establishment of the passover festival had already been once enjoined. (Comp. Exod. 12. 1-20.) **For an ordinance**—An established observance. **Forever**—Orthodox Hebrews to-day still celebrate the passover and the feast of unleavened bread in much the same way. **25. As he hath promised**—The definite promise had been given to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and already on an earlier occasion to Moses also. (Comp. Gen. 17. 9; 28. 4, etc.) **27. Who passed**—Or, *for that he passed*. **Worshiped**—An expression of faith, allegiance, joy, and gratitude. **28. So did they**—The miracles wrought by the hand of Moses and Aaron, and the earnestness of their speech, had so fully convinced the people of the truth of all that was told them concerning Jehovah's intention to deliver them from the hands of their oppressors, that they were ready to obey implicitly in all things commanded them. **29. Unto the firstborn of the captive**—From the highest to the lowest without exception. **30. There was not a house where there was not one dead**—In reality there would be many families, doubtless, in which there were no children and in which at the same time neither husband nor wife was firstborn, so that the wording of this verse contains perhaps, a slight hyperbole. The student must bear in mind constantly the

fact that Scripture language is the language of the Oriental, and that, especially where tragical and exciting events are narrated, this language of the Oriental is always highly rhetorical and often poetical.

Application: Christ Our Passover

In the Old Testament passover we have an eminent type of Christ, who, according to John, is "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1. 29). Paul is even more specific when he says, "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7). I. *Points of Analogy between Type and Antitype.*—1. The death of a blameless victim. 2. The design to secure the redemption from a dreadful evil. "Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 10); "Saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5. 9). 3. The principle of deliverance through vicarious sacrifice (comp. Rom. 3. 25; 5. 6; 1 Pet. 3. 18). 4. The need of personal appropriating faith. "The people bowed the head and worshiped" (v. 27); "That whosoever believeth on him should not perish" (John 3. 16). II. *The Surpassing Excellence of the True Passover.*—1 A greater redemption in Christ than the redemption from physical slavery. 2. A contrast in the specific blessings obtained. Israel obtained escape from servitude, outward liberty, guidance, an earthly inheritance. We through Christ obtain pardon of all sin, righteousness, every needed temporal and spiritual blessing in life, an eternal inheritance. (Adapted from the Pulpit Commentary.)

For Further Discussion

What is meant by "hardening the heart"? In what sense did God harden Pharaoh's heart? Can persistent disobedience to the known will of God result in anything else than hardness of heart? Was punishment for wrongdoing the only purpose which the chastisement of the Egyptians served? What other purpose, if any, did it serve?

LESSON XI.—June 16

ISRAEL'S ESCAPE FROM EGYPT.—Exod. 14. 13-27.

Read Exod. 13. 1 to 15. 21. Memorise verses 13, 14.

13. And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah, which he will work for you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. 14. Jehovah will fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace. 15. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. 16. And lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thy hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go into the midst of the sea on

dry ground. **17.** And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall go in after them: and I will get me honor upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. **18.** And the Egyptians shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have gotten me honor upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen. **19.** And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud removed from before them, and stood behind them: **20** and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night: and the one came not near the other all the night. **21.** And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and Jehovah caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. **22.** And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. **23.** And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. **24.** And it came to pass in the morning watch, that Jehovah looked forth upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians. **25.** And he took off their chariot wheels, and they drove them heavily; so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians. **26.** And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thy hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. **27.** And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea.

Golden Text.—Thus Jehovah saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the seashore.—Exod. 14. 30.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Pharaoh's pursuit, Exod. 13. 17 to 14. 9. *T.* Israel's Escape from Egypt, Exod. 14. 10-22. *W.* Israel's Escape from Egypt, Exod. 14. 23-31. *Th.* Song of Deliverance, Exod. 15. 1-19. *F.* Remembrance, Psa. 77. 11-20. *S.* God's deliverance, Psa. 106. 1-12. *S.* The mighty arm, Isa. 51. 9-16.

Introduction: The Pharaohs of the Oppression and of the Exodus

Ramses II, of the XIXth Egyptian dynasty, is generally regarded as the Pharaoh of the Oppression, and his son and successor, Merenptah, as the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Certain references to the movements of the "Habiri" (Hebrews) found in the Tel-el-Amarna letters, however, have led some to suggest the XVIIIth dynasty, and the reign of Amenhotep III or IV, as the more probable time of the exodus. The city of Raamses,

mentioned in Exod. 1. 11 as a store city built by the Hebrews, was doubtless named after the reigning king, probably Ramses II, who was noted as a builder of cities. The Oppression apparently lasted many years, according to the Bible account, and this also agrees with the long reign of Ramses II, which was 67 years. The reign of Merenptah, on the contrary, was brief. A monument of this king mentions the Israelites as having been destroyed or harried by the king.

Explanation: A Textual Study

13. Our lesson narrative begins with Israel at the shore of the Red Sea, and Pharaoh and his host in pursuit. Apparently there was no way of escape, and the people began to murmur against Moses for having brought them into these straits. Then it was that Moses said unto the people, **Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah.** **The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day**—Or, *whereas ye have seen the Egyptians to-day.* **14. Hold your peace**—Await the outcome in quiet confidence. **16. Thy rod**—The same shepherd's staff, doubtless, which Moses had carried while tending the flocks in the wilderness when God appeared to him in the burning bush. **The sea**—The narrowest and shallowest point of the Red Sea at its extreme northern end. The sea at that time extended farther north than at present. **17. They shall go in after them**—It was the presumptuous boldness and bloodthirstiness of the Egyptians which alone brought them into danger and death. Had they only stood still and allowed the Israelites according to their previous permission to depart, no evil would have befallen them. **I will get me honor upon Pharaoh**—Words at first sight of seeming vainglory on the part of Jehovah, but in the state of civilization in those days a deity was judged only by its power. To the Egyptians, therefore, Jehovah could speak only in words and works of might. **19. The angel of God**—The same divine presence which manifested itself in the pillar of cloud is called sometimes "Jehovah" (Exod. 13. 21; 14. 24), and sometimes "the Angel of God," as here. **20. And there was the cloud and the darkness**—The rendering of the Authorized Version, "It was a cloud and darkness *to them,*" is also permissible, and in perfect harmony with the sense of the Hebrew. **21. Caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind**—This is not an isolated instance of such a phenomenon at this place. It is thought probable that the waters of the Red Sea may have extended as far north as the Bitter Lakes. A strong southeast wind by driving the water of the lakes northward, with a simultaneous ebb of the tide in the lower gulf, may have produced the effect described in the text. **22. The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left**—That is, a protection and a defence, preventing Pharaoh from attacking them on either flank. **23. His horsemen**—Possibly charioteers. **24. The morning watch**—Between 2 A. M. and sunrise. **Jehovah looked forth**

upon the host of the Egyptians—The meaning of these words is explained in verses 18–20 of Psa. 77, which is generally supposed to belong to this point in the narrative of the Exodus: “The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind; the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook. Thy way was in the sea. . . . Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron” **25. Took off**—Rather, *bound*, as in the Septuagint and the Syriac versions, the thought being that the chariot wheels sank into the sand, and consequently, as the next clause points out, **they drove them heavily**. **27. Strength**—*Wonted flow.*

Application: Darkness, Yet Light

“And there was the cloud and the darkness, yet gave it light by night” (v. 20). I. *Light to the Friend, Darkness to the Foe*.—This is the double aspect of God’s attributes. Thus God’s omnipotence, which is a defense and blessing to the believer, is a source of terror to the transgressor. (Comp. Heb. 10. 31. and 1 Pet. 1. 5.) Likewise God’s omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, and constancy have the same double aspect. II *The Same Is True of God’s Laws*.—1. Physical laws. Constitution and laws of nature are favorable to virtue, hostile to vice. 2. Moral law. This condemns the sinner and justifies the saint. 3. Mental and spiritual laws. For example, the law of habit. III. *God’s Word Has This Double Aspect*.—To the prayerful, believing person, it is a lamp to the feet and a light to the path, but to the presumptuous, proud, and disobedient it is a stumbling-block and an enemy. IV. *The Gospel Message Has This Double Aspect*.—“The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1. 18). (Adapted from the Pulpit Commentary.)

For Further Discussion

Does God ever command a retreat? What is the duty of the church in the face of apparently insurmountable difficulties according to the teaching of our lesson passage? Does God still work miracles? Give examples.

LESSON XII.—June 23.—Review

Read Psa. 106. 1–12.

Golden Text.—When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.—Isa. 43. 2.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Jacob’s Vision and God’s Promise, Gen. 28. 1–5, 10–22. *T.* Joseph Sold by His Brothers, Gen. 37. 5–28. *W.* Joseph the Wise Ruler in Egypt, Gen. 41. 38–49. *Th.* Joseph Forgives His

Brothers, Gen. 45. 1-15; 50. 15-21. **F.** Israel Enslaved in Egypt, Exod. 1. 1-14. **S.** Moses Called to Deliver Israel, Exod. 3. 1-14. **S.** The Passover, Exod. 12. 21-30.

Introduction

The teacher will find it profitable as an introduction to this review exercise to refer again to the Preview which precedes the lesson for Sunday, April 7. The review of the lessons proper which follows is in the form of a short list of suggestive questions covering the period to which the lessons for the three months have been devoted. If time permits after the questions have been taken up and answered in the class session, the further discussion of some one or more central thoughts suggested by the questions, or possibly a study of the Golden Text for the Quarter, will be found profitable.

Review by Lessons

What period of time do the lessons of this Quarter cover? From what event to what event in the history of the Hebrew nation? Give what you consider to be the most conspicuous character trait of each of the following persons: Jacob, Joseph, Esau, Moses, Aaron. What do you consider the most important or crucial event in the life of each of these persons? In what respects is the character of Jacob worthy of emulation? In what respect not? How does the story of Joseph and his brethren reveal and emphasize the power of a guilty conscience? What benefits, if any, accrued to Israel from its experience of slavery in Egypt? In what respect was it especially advantageous to Moses, in view of the future service he was to render in leading his people out of Egypt, to have been brought up at the Egyptian court? What other special equipment had he for his great work? Under what disadvantages did he labor? What was the significance of the passover to the generation living at the time of its institution? What was its twofold significance to later generations? How are we to view the severe punishment which Jehovah inflicted upon the Egyptians prior to the escape of Israel from Egypt? Did the fact that God chose to reveal himself to the world more fully in his dealings with one chosen people and nation lessen his interest in other nations and peoples?

The Golden Text

In verses 1-12 of Psa. 106, which are to be read in connection with this Golden Text, the inspired poet is singing of the loving kindness of Jehovah which endureth forever. In the midst of his song of praise with which the psalm opens he is reminded of the manifold transgressions of Israel against Jehovah, and of his successive chastisements and repeated subsequent deliverances of his chosen people. Among the deliverances which the psalmist recalls the escape of Israel from Egypt and the passage of the people through the Red Sea is one. Of this he sings in the words,

"And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
And the waters covered their adversaries;
There was not one of them left.
Then believed they his words;
They sang his praise."

The prophet, like the psalmist, lived many centuries after this wonderful deliverance. The intervening history of Israel had been rich in deliverance and blessings, many of which are included in the psalmist's enumeration in the verses following those we have quoted. While the poet commemorates in this psalm deliverances of the past, the prophet on his part, as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, gives to Israel the assurance of a continuation of the loving kindness of Jehovah toward his people in the future. Their passing through the waters unharmed, first at the Red Sea and later at the Jordan, had long since become a typical experience illustrating God's protection; and therefore when the prophet wishes to express the greatness and constancy of Jehovah's love and care for his people he voices the divine promise of constant protection in the words of our text: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." The burden of the prophet's message is that God will never forsake or fail to protect his chosen people.

LESSON XIII.—June 30

TEMPERANCE LESSON.—1 Cor. 10. 23-33

Read 1 Cor. 10.

Memorize verse 31.

23. All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. 24. Let no man seek his own, but *each* his neighbor's good. 25. whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake; 26 for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. 27. If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28. But if any man say unto you, This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: 29 conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? 30. If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? 31. Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 32. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: 33 even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the *profit* of the many, that they may be saved.

Golden Text.—It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth.—Rom. 14. 21.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Temperance Lesson, 1. Cor. 10. 23–33. *T.* Keeping under, 1 Cor. 9. 19–27. *W.* A stumbling-block, 1 Cor. 8. 1–13. *Th.* For another's sake, Rom. 14. 13–21. *F.* Out of darkness, 1 Pet. 2. 1–12. *S.* Be vigilant! 1 Pet. 5. 1–11. *S.* Sober living, Titus 2. 6–15.

Introduction: Corinth and Its Church

As the capital city of a Roman province Corinth was probably in the time of Paul a more important city in many respects than Athens itself. It was the center of government and commerce and of the actual busy life of the Grecian people. Paul visited Corinth on his first European mission tour (Acts 18. 1–18). He at once saw the importance of the city as a center from which the influence of a strong church might radiate. His first converts included both Jews and Greeks; but in the church which he organized the Gentile element largely predominated. These Greeks, or Gentiles, had, of course, been idolaters before accepting Christianity, and their heathen antecedents and associations were the cause of many troubles to the church, as the letters of Paul to the Corinthians make very plain. The probable date of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians is 57 A. D.

Explanation: A Textual Study

23. Lawful—In the sense of permissible. **Expedient**—Profitable, wise, contributing to a desired end. **Edify**—From *aedes*, to build up, that is, a Christian life; hence the strengthening of faith and the molding of character.

24. Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good—The great fundamental principle of Christian life, that of unselfish and self-forgetful service for others.

25. Shambles—Tables or stalls in the market place, especially in the meat market; hence, the market place itself. **Asking no question for conscience' sake**—Raise no unnecessary question of principle when in your own mind that question is already settled and the principle of practice involved established.

26. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof—These words are found in Psa. 24. 1, and a very similar phrase is found in Psa. 50. 12. It is not unlikely that the apostle had one of these psalms in mind, and consciously used this sentence as a writer not seldom weaves into his paragraph a fitting quotation.

27. One of them that believe not—That is, one not a Christian, which in Corinth meant, of course, an idolater. **To a feast**—At family and other social gatherings feasting was common. Many of the religious ceremonies also were made times of feasting. **Asking no questions**—It would be unnecessary scrupulousness ont he part of a guest at such a feast to ask concerning each dish whether the the food had or had not been previously dedicated to

an idol. **28. This hath been offered in sacrifice**—Such a definite statement made to the guest would indicate a conscientious scruple on the part of the person making the statement. In such a case it became necessary to take into account the influence that the action might have on this person and on others. **For his sake**—Lest his faith be weakened or he be led to regard your life and practice as inconsistent with your profession of faith. **31. Do all to the glory of God**—In themselves, eating and drinking may be indifferent things; but there are circumstances under which they, at times, become matters of highest importance. At all times the glory of God is to be the chief aim of all we do. **32. Give no occasion of stumbling**—This is the negative putting of the same principle expressed in the preceding verse. In giving an occasion of stumbling to others we fail to glorify God; that is, others will not by our actions be led to faith in him. Our inconsistency of life robs God of the glory which consistency of life on our part would bring him in the eyes of others. **33.** This verse relates in another form the principle of expediency of action for another's profit.

Application: For Another's Sake

I. Abstain Wholly from the Use of Alcoholic Liquors.—1. The absolute prohibitions of the Bible do not exhaust the category of things to be avoided in the Christian life. Expediency, the edification and nourishing of the inner man, and the possible influence of the action upon others should be primary considerations also. 2. No man liveth unto himself. For the sake of the influence of his example on others, if not because of the danger to himself, every Christian should be a total abstainer. This is Paul's great argument in our lesson passage. **II. Vote against the Saloon.**—1. The corner saloon, though it has no attraction for you, and does not tempt your son, still presents an overwhelming temptation to some weaker brother every day of the year. 2. Outspoken opposition against the liquor traffic may be unpleasant, may incur unwelcome notoriety, criticism, and enmity, and may take valuable time; but your state, county, township, or ward on the side of temperance may—yea, doubtless will—mean that many lives and many homes will be saved from ruin.

For Further Discussion

How can a Christian do the most toward furthering the cause of temperance reform? Is a Christian ever justified in doing nothing toward aiding in some definite way the cause of temperance? What is the extent of a Christian's personal responsibility for crime and ruin caused by the drink evil about him?

THIRD QUARTER

Preview: The Exodus Journey

The lessons of this Quarter cover practically the period of the Exodus journey. In Num. 33, 1-49, will be found a summary of the itinerary of this journey. This itinerary enumerates forty-one stages or forty stations between Raamses, the starting point in Egypt, and the final encampment of the Israelites at the Jordan River. Two dates are given: the date of the start, the fifteenth day of the first month of the first year, and the date of Aaron's death, the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year. (Comp. Num. 33, 38, 39.) Of the forty stations of the journey enumerated in the book of Numbers and in Exodus very few have been accurately located, while many are altogether unknown. Even the location of Mount Sinai has been much disputed, though the traditional site near the southern point of the Arabian peninsula may still be accepted with confidence.

LESSON I.—July 7

GOD FEEDS ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS.— Exod. 16. 1-15

Read Exod. 15. 22 to 18. 27.

Memorize verse 4.

1. And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. 2. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness: 3 and the children of Israel said unto them, Would that we had died by the hand of Jehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger. 4. Then said Jehovah unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or not. 5. And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, that they shall prepare that which they bring in, and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. 6. And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even then ye shall know that Jehovah hath brought you out from the land of Egypt; 7 and in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of Jehovah; for that he heareth your murmurings against Jehovah: and what are we, that ye murmur

against us? 8. And Moses said, *This shall be*, when Jehovah shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that Jehovah heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: and what are we? your murmurings are not against us, but against Jehovah. 9. And Moses said unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before Jehovah; for he hath heard your murmurings. 10. And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of Jehovah, appeared in the cloud. 11. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 12. I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel: speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God. 13. And it came to pass at even, that the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the camp. 14. And when the dew that lay was gone up behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing, small as the hoarfrost on the ground. 15. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, What is it? for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, It is the bread which Jehovah hath given you to eat.

Golden Text.—I am the living bread which came down out of heaven.—John 6. 51.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* God Feeds Israel in the Wilderness, Exod. 15. 22 to 16. 3. *T.* God Feeds Israel in the Wilderness, Exod. 16. 4–15. *W.* Slow to learn, Exod. 16. 16–26. *Th.* Food of forty years, Exod. 16. 27–36. *F.* Discontent, Num. 11. 1–9. *S.* The true bread, John 6. 28–40. *S.* The Bread of Life, John 6. 41–51.

Introduction: Intervening Events

After recording the overthrow of the Egyptians in the Red Sea the historian of the exodus narrative points out the effect which this marvelous deliverance had upon the children of Israel in the words, “And Israel saw the great work which Jehovah did upon the Egyptians, and the people feared Jehovah: and they believed in Jehovah, and in his servant Moses” (Exod. 14. 31). At this point the historical narrator also introduces the song of Moses and Israel commemorating the escape out of Egypt and the power and goodness of Jehovah (Exod. 15. 1–21). Leaving the shore of the Red Sea, Israel under the leadership of Moses and Aaron turned its face toward the east and set out to journey to the Land of Promise. The first stopping place at which fresh water was found was at Elim, more than three days’ journey from the starting point, though probably not far from the shore of the sea.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. From Elim—The Arabian peninsula is largely an arid desert region, with here and there a fertile spot

near the seashore or in the valley of some little stream flowing from the interior. On the assumption that the traditional site of Sinai is correct, Elim has been identified with a fertile wady basin (river valley) near the coast, about one third of the way from the northern end of the Red Sea. **Wilderness of Sin**—The open plain east and northeast of Mount Sinai. To be carefully distinguished from the wilderness of Zin mentioned later in the narrative (Num. 13. 21 and elsewhere). In Num. 33 an encampment at the Red Sea is mentioned between the stations at Elim and at the wilderness of Sin. **2. Murmured against Moses**—For the second time in their brief journey. (Comp. Exod. 15. 24.) **3. Would that we had died**—It takes great faith to overcome present troubles. The Israelites, like most people of to-day, were creatures of the present moment whose vision of life was circumscribed by the bounds of the present environment. **When we sat by the flesh-pots**—Referring to the meat diet of which at least they had had an adequate supply while in Egypt. **4. A day's portion every day**—An exhortation to contentment in harmony with the later teachings of Jesus in the Lord's Prayer. **7. Murmurings against Jehovah**—Moses and Aaron were the representatives of Jehovah unto the people, and the attitude of the people toward them was in reality their attitude toward Him whose representatives they were. **10. The glory of Jehovah**—Apparently not the same glory referred to in verse 7 above. There the reference seems to be to the miracle which Jehovah will perform every morning, here to the glorious manifestation of Jehovah's presence **in the cloud**. The cloud referred to is the same pillar of cloud which accompanied Israel throughout its wilderness journey. **11. At even**—Literally, *between the two evenings*, that is, in the late afternoon. **14. A small round thing**—Scaly, flakelike kernels in shape and size apparently like the hull of a wheat kernel. Elsewhere it is compared to the coriander seed, and here to **the hoarfrost on the ground**. It has been pointed out that at certain times of the year there is in this desert region a deposit of glutenous substance from the air upon leaves and stones, which, when scraped off, resembles thick honey; and also that the trees and shrubs themselves, especially the tamarisks at certain seasons, exude a substance which gathers in round white or grayish grains on the leaves. Both substances are said to be edible. But the manna of our narrative cannot be identified with either of these substances, since in some respects at least it differs from both. The miracle, moreover, which would provide either or both in sufficient quantities for the whole people and at all seasons through a long period of years would be as great as the miracle of providing bread in the literal sense from heaven. **What is it?**—Or, *it is manna, or, it is a gift.* **Bread**—Rather, food; not bread as we know it.

Application: Godliness with Contentment

"But godliness with contentment is great gain"
(1 Tim. 6. 6). **I. Murmuring against God**.—Every form of

discontentment with one's circumstances is in reality a murmuring against Providence. In adverse circumstances and times of hardship two things are to be kept clearly in mind: (1) the measure of one's own responsibility for these circumstances, and (2) the fact that hardships and privations cannot in themselves work any permanent injury, but may, in God's providence, be a positive blessing in bringing out the deeper, stronger, and finer traits of character. II. *Israel's failure*.—1. Israel's failure was due to a lack of faith and trust in Jehovah (godliness). This, after his marvelous works in Egypt and at the Red Sea, was inexcusable. 2. It was this lack of godliness in the Israelites which brought discontentment. Where faith is there can be no murmuring against God. III. *Contentment a Means of Grace*.—Itself the rich fruitage of grace, contentment results in an increase of grace. Discontentment, on the contrary, by incapacitating men physically and mentally for overcoming hardships and adversities, aggravates their cause and brings with it prolonged adversity.

For Further Discussion

In what respects, if in any, were the Israelites better off in Egypt than in the wilderness of Sin? Did the fact that they had no heavy burdens to bear, such as they had borne in Egypt, have anything to do with their discontentment? Is it possible for a man always to rise supreme above the circumstances and environment in which he is placed?

LESSON II.—July 14

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS—DUTIES TOWARD GOD.—Exod. 20. 1-11

Read Exod. 19. 1 to 20. 11. Memorize verses 1-11.

1. And God spake all these words, saying, 2. I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 4. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, 6 and showing loving kindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. 7. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. 8. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor*

thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: **11** for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

Golden Text.—Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.—Deut. 6. 5.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Commandments—Duties toward God, Exod. 20. 1-11. *T.* Hear and learn, Deut. 31. 7-13. *W.* Keep and teach, Deut. 4. 1-13. *Th.* Make them known, Psa. 78, 1-8. *F.* Blessing of obedience, Psa. 119. 1-16. *S.* The first commandment, Mark 12. 28-34. *S.* Love and obedience, John 14. 15-24.

Introduction: The Decalogue

The word “Decalogue” means “the law of the ten words,” which is the name applied to the Ten Commandments in Exod. 34. 28, Deut. 4. 13, and other passages. The name “ten commandments” is a less accurate though more common rendering of the original Hebrew used. The titles “testimony” and “covenant” also occur (Comp. Exod. 25. 21; Deut. 9. 9; Psa. 119). Of the Decalogue we have in the Old Testament two distinct versions (Exod. 20. 2-17; Deut. 5. 6-21), varying slightly in details and in the reasons for obedience which are attached to the separate commands. These variations will be pointed out in the Textual Studies below. They have led some to suppose that the original code was in a briefer and simpler form, the reasons and promises having been added later to strengthen their appeal to the mind and will. In general it may be said that the version as given in Exod. 20. 2-17 is considered much the superior as well as the older and purer, and hence it has always been considered the classic version.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. More than six weeks have passed since the events of our last lesson occurred. Israel under the leadership of Moses has proceeded on its journey toward Sinai, making several stops by the way. The stages of the journey are indicated in Num. 33. 12-15. **And God spake all these words**—Later they were committed to writing on tables of stone (Exod. 31. 18). **2. Bondage**—Hebrew, *bondmen*. **3. Before me**—Or, *besides me*, that is, in addition to. They were not to recognize such anywhere. **4. Graven**—The term in Hebrew means also *molten*. As the first commandment asserts the unity of God and is a protest against polytheism, so the second emphasizes his spirituality and is a protest against idolatry and materialism. **The water under the earth**—Compare the ancient Hebrew conception of the use of the universe in the Textual Study for January 6. **5. Not bow down thyself unto them**—

Herein rather than in the making of the images would lie the sin. The commandment is not intended as a prohibition against art or sculpture in which ideal forms are set forth. **Upon the third and . . . fourth generation**—Pointing out the hereditary influence of a sinful life. **6. Thousands**—Or, a thousand generations. **7. Not take the name of Jehovah thy God**—A too literal interpretation of this commandment later caused the substitution of the word "Lord" for "Yahweh" in public reading of the Scriptures. From a still later corruption resulting from a combination of the two words the word "Jehovah" resulted. **In vain**—Lit., *for vanity or falsehood*. **8.** This verse as it occurs in Deut. 5. 12 reads, "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee." **9. Six days shalt thou labor**—A command as imperative as the prohibition which follows. Work as well as rest is ordained of God. **10. A Sabbath**—The word "Sabbath" is derived from a root meaning *to desist, to cease*. Hence the idea connected with Sabbath rest is that of cessation from work. **Not do any work**—Even Judaism from the beginning made exceptions to this rule in its extreme literal interpretation. For Christ's indorsement of these exceptions see Matt. 12. 5-11. **11. For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, . . . and rested the seventh day**—The reason for obedience attached to the fourth commandment as given in Deuteronomy varies from the reason here given. There (Deut. 5. 14, 15), we read, "that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." As has already been pointed out, biblical scholars agree that the form of the commandment as given in Exodus is older than the form given in Deuteronomy.

Application: No Other Gods

I. The New Birth of a Nation.—1. National life begins with national consciousness. This in case of Israel had been all but crushed out during the long period of slavery in Egypt. At Sinai the national consciousness of the people was rekindled and quickened by a special revelation from Jehovah. 2. This revelation emphasized the great fact that Jehovah was not only the one God of Israel as distinguished from the gods of surrounding nations, but that he was the only true God over all nations. This is the cardinal truth both of God's revelation of himself at Sinai and of the ethical code which he gave the nation by the hand of their leader Moses. 3. The covenant established at Sinai between Jehovah, the eternal, living God, and the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob made of Israel a peculiar people set apart for a great mission to mankind. And despite all their faults, backslidings, and the many returns to idolatry the people never again wholly lost their consciousness of their peculiar relation to Jehovah. **II. A Progressive Revelation.**—A comparison

of God's revelation of himself to Israel at Sinai with his revelation of himself to the world in Jesus Christ illustrates the progressive character of revelation as a whole. For Israel at Sinai the Apostles' Creed was an impossibility. Monotheism as the controlling faith of a great people necessarily antedated Christianity, and for a people divinely destined to be the representative bearers of this faith in the midst of an idolatrous and polytheistic race, just such a definite and conclusive revelation from God as was vouchsafed to the Hebrew people at the outset of their national career was necessary.

For Further Discussion

In what sense and to what extent was the work of Moses that of a reformer? To what extent was that work creative? What were the terms of the covenant made at Sinai between Jehovah and Israel? Point out the deeper spiritual meaning given to the Mosaic law in Deuteronomy.

LESSON III.—July 21

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS—DUTIES TOWARD MEN.—Exod. 20. 12-17

Read Exod. 20, 24.

Memorize verses 12-17

12. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. **13.** Thou shalt not kill. **14.** Thou shalt not commit adultery. **15.** Thou shalt not steal. **16.** Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. **17.** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

Golden Text.—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—Lev. 19. 18.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Commandments—Duties toward Men, Exod. 20. 12-20. *T.* As thyself, Lev. 19. 11-18. *W.* Reward in keeping, Psa. 19. 7-14. *Th.* A lesson in parable, Luke 10. 25-37. *F.* Fulfilling by love, Rom. 13. 7-14. *S.* Common duties, Rom. 12. 9-21. *B.* Brotherly love, 1 John 4. 7-21.

Introduction: Toward Man

The right attitude of man toward God is inseparable from a right attitude toward his fellow men. And because of this inseparable relation man's attitude toward his fellow men is as important as his relation to God. All biblical teaching regarding the brotherhood of men has its root and beginning in the Old Testament, possibly in God's question to Cain, "Where is thy brother?"—but if not there, then here; and if there, then here in its

broader application and fuller development. Comparing the teachings of the second group of commandments, those relating to our duty to our fellow men, with the New Testament teaching on this point, we find in these commandments only the negative side of the biblical teaching. Here we have prohibitions, and the whole legislation rests on the plane of justice. In the New Testament, in the teachings of Jesus and later in those of the apostles, we behold the positive side—a higher plane, that, namely, of active love, which manifests itself not in desisting from evil merely but in doing positive good.

Explanation: A Textual Study

12. Honor thy father and thy mother—In this commandment we have, as it were, a connecting link between the first group and the second, and it is hard to determine with which of the groups the commandment itself belongs. On the one hand, it inculcates *piety*, as do the commandments preceding, and like them is distinguished from the remaining commandments, which inculcate rather *morality*. On the other hand, it refers not to man's duty toward God, but to his duty toward man, and in this particular belongs with the second group.

13. Thou shalt not kill—A moral precept of all ethical codes. A sense of the sanctity of human life necessarily precedes a sense of other duties and obligations toward our fellow men.

14, 15. Not commit adultery—The second duty of every man to his neighbor is that he respect family ties, and this naturally leads to a sense of personal ownership of all things relating to a family household; hence the next commandment, **Thou shalt not steal**.

16. Not bear false witness—Neither by deceiving our neighbor nor by slandering him, two distinct forms of false witnessing.

17. Thou shalt not covet—In this commandment we discover one point in which the Decalogue teaching with regard to man's duty to his neighbor is far superior to the teaching of any other ethical code on the same point. The Mosaic law undertakes to regulate man's inner as well as his outer life; his thoughts as well as his actions. No other system of laws ever promulgated among men presumes to do this. The Decalogue, and especially this commandment, proceeds on the assumption that man is free to control his thoughts as well as his actions. We note the order observed in enumerating the things that may be coveted: a **house** is needed before one can establish a household, a home to which to take her before a **wife**; and the establishment of the household and of family life, again, necessarily precede the introduction of **manservant** and **maidservant** and the accumulations of possessions in which the wealth of a household was considered to consist.

Application: The Whole Law

"On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" (Matt. 22. 40). I. *Negative Old Testament Position*.—As already suggested in our Intro-

duction, we have here prohibitions principally. It is the authority and power of God and his hatred of sin which are emphasized. The controlling motive determining action is the motive of fear. II. *Positive New Testament Position*.—On the higher plane of New Testament teaching with regard to man's duty to his neighbor and to God we note especially two things, namely: 1. The authority and power of God and the motive of fear emphasized in the Decalogue are not done away with, but rather exalted and lifted to a higher plane. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill," the law (Matt. 5. 17). We note in this connection also the more exacting requirements of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where he compares the Old Testament teaching with his own. (Comp. Matt. 5. 21-48.) 2. Exhortations to positive virtues are added to the prohibitions, the motive of love to that of fear. The principle of vicarious suffering for others is introduced and lifted into the foreground. III. *Christ's Summary of the Law*.—This summary is given in Luke 22. 37-40. 1. Of the two commandments enunciated by Christ the first is a summary of our duties toward God, enumerated in the first five commandments of the Decalogue, and the second the summary of our duties toward our fellow men, given in the second group of Decalogue commandments. 2. One key word—"love." John, who lived closest to the heart of the Master, has much to say about love in both his gospel and his epistles. It is he who records the words of Jesus, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13. 34). Paul emphasizes the same truth when he points out that "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: love therefore is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13. 10).

For Further Discussion

Compare in detail the Ten Commandments as given in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. Is it possible for any man to keep the whole law as set forth in the Decalogue? If not, why did Jesus require even more than was embodied in the Decalogue?

LESSON IV.—July 28

THE GOLDEN CALF.—Exod. 32. 1-8, 30-35

Read Exod. 32-34.

Memorize verses 34, 35.

1. And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. 2. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. 3. And all the

people brake off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. 4. And he received it at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made it a molten calf: and they said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 5. And when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-morrow shall be a feast to Jehovah. 6. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play. 7. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, that thou broughtest up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: 8 they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed unto it, and said, These are thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 30. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto Jehovah; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin. 31. And Moses returned unto Jehovah, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. 32. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. 33. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. 34. And now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine angel shall go before thee; nevertheless in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them. 35. And Jehovah smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made.

Golden Text.—Little children, guard yourselves from idols.—1 John 5. 21.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Golden Calf, Exod. 32. 1–14. *T.* The law forgotten, Exod. 32. 15–24. *W.* The Golden Calf, Exod. 32. 25–35. *Th.* The second tables, Exod. 34. 1–9, 27, 28. *F.* Remember! Deut. 9. 7–21. *S.* The sin repeated, 1 Kings 12. 25–33. *S.* Forgetting God, Psa. 106. 16–25.

Introduction: Detailed Legislation

The Ten Commandments are valid for all time. In some points it is true they do not reach altogether the high spiritual level of New Testament teaching, but the principles of life and action set forth in them are in no detail abrogated or suspended by the fuller light of truth which Christ brought to the world. Indeed, for the people to whom these commandments were given their meaning proved too profoundly spiritual to be rightly understood and applied. A more detailed legislation for them was necessary, something more tangible in form of type, symbol, and ceremony. This detailed regulation, especially of the religious life of the

people, the Mosaic law supplied. The chapters intervening between the last lesson and this one are devoted in a large measure to the setting forth of this legislation. A careful study of these chapters will throw much light on the whole period covered by the lessons of this Quarter.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Moses delayed—From Deut. 9. 11, 12 we learn that Moses was more than forty days and nights on the mountain. **Make us gods**—Or, *a god*. The word “god” is here to be understood in the sense of idol, as in many other passages in the Old Testament. **We know not what is become of him**—Having apparently lost their leader, and apparently also the manifestation of the Divine Presence, the pillar of cloud, which during this time rested on the mountain heights, the people grew impatient and demanded some other symbol of that Presence, which should henceforth be carried before them in their journeyings. **2. Aaron said**—The one thing Aaron was especially distinguished for was his power of speech. This rightly used on this occasion might have averted the idolatry into which the people were led. **Break off**—In the sense of remove. **Of your sons**—The men are not mentioned, though at an earlier time, as appears from Gen. 35. 4, they too wore rings. **3. Brake**—The old form of the past tense, *broke*. **Brought them**—Apparently, contrary to the real desire and expectation of **Aaron**. **4. Fashioned it with a graving tool**—The meaning of the original is uncertain, but in 2 Kings 5. 23 the same Hebrew verb is translated “bound (the gold) in bags.” This seems more in harmony with the sense of the following clause, **and made it a molten calf**. **5. Built an altar before it**—Thus encouraging the idolatry he had failed to restrain. **6. Sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play**—In the manner of heathen tribes and nations. **7. Go, get thee down**—The phrase implies the urgency of the command—“make haste.” **Thy people, that thou broughtest**—Moses was their leader, and as such deeply attached to them. Some see in this expression also an implied rejection of the people by God, because of the idolatry into which they had fallen, but of which Moses as yet knew nothing. **8. Turned aside quickly**—Breaking the pledges they had so recently made. (Comp. Exod. 19. 8; 24. 3.) **30. Sinned a great sin**—Gross ingratitude and the breaking of a definite promise and pledge were both involved. Verses 9–29, which intervene, describe the anger of Moses on reaching the camp and beholding the evidences of idolatry, and also the summary punishment visited upon the most guilty; **Peradventure**—Possibly. **32. Forgive their sin**—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book—The ellipsis indicated by the dash is to be supplied in thought by some such words as “well and good,” or “I am content,” or “I have no more to say.” For similar ellipses, compare Luke 13. 9; John 6. 62; Rom. 9. 22. **33. Him will I blot out of my book**—Every man shall be accountable for his own sin in the

final reckoning with a righteous God. 34, 35. The place—The promised land. **I will visit their sin upon them**—We are left in doubt whether the threatened visitation of punishment followed immediately, as some have thought from the reading of the next verse, **And Jehovah smote the people**, or whether the punishment referred to here was inflicted at some later time. (Comp. Num. 14. 35.)

Application: Built an Altar

I. Challenging Sin.—1. Aaron's first mistake in handling the situation presented by the request of the people for an idol was a mistake in the method by which he sought to restrain them. Misgauging popular feeling and temper, he encouraged the tendency to idolatry by challenging the people to take an extreme step in the wrong direction. 2. The people, on their part, misunderstood his challenge, and apparently thought him to be of their opinion in the matter. So men to-day by challenging sin are often placed in a false position.

II. In a False Position.—1. Having apparently indorsed their sentiments and demands by his request, the prompt compliance of the people with his order placed Aaron in a position from which it was difficult to recede. 2. Deeming it useless to oppose the demands of the people at this juncture, he decided to play his false part to the end. **III. No Middle Ground.**—1. In the conflict between sin and righteousness there is no middle ground. "He that is not for me is against me." 2. He who builds not an altar unto Jehovah may some day, though unwilling, be forced to contribute toward the erection of an altar to some idol he has helped to create.

For Further Discussion

Elements of strength and, if any, of weakness in the character of Moses brought out by the incidents of to-day's lesson. Elements of strength and of weakness in the character of Aaron. To what extent does this lesson passage teach personal accountability for sin?

LESSON V.—August 4

THE TABERNACLE.—Exod. 40. 1-13, 34-38

Read Exod. 35-40.

Memorize verses 34, 35.

1. And Jehovah spake unto Moses, saying, 2. On the first day of the first month shalt thou rear up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 3. And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and thou shalt screen the ark with the veil. 4. And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof. 5. And thou shalt set the golden altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and

put the screen of the door to the tabernacle. 6. And thou shalt set the altar of burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 7. And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar, and shalt put water therein. 8. And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the screen of the gate of the court. 9. And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that is therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the furniture thereof: and it shall be holy. 10. And thou shalt anoint the altar of burnt offering, and all its vessels, and sanctify the altar: and the altar shall be most holy. 11. And thou shalt anoint the laver and its base, and sanctify it. 12. And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water. 13. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments; and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. 34. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. 35. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle. 36. And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Israel went onward, throughout all their journeys: 37 but if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. 38. For the cloud of Jehovah was upon the tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

Golden Text.—Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.
—Exod. 40. 34.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The pattern given, Exod. 25. 1-22. *T.* Willing gifts, Exod. 35. 20-29. *W.* The Tabernacle, Exod. 40. 1-16. *Th.* The Tabernacle, Exod. 40. 17-27. *F.* The Tabernacle, Exod. 40. 28-38. *S.* According to pattern, Heb. 8, 1-6. *S.* A greater tabernacle, Heb. 9. 1-14.

Introduction: The Three Tabernacles

The Old Testament mentions three distinct tabernacles. 1. The first of these was a provisional structure erected after the events narrated in our last lesson. For this provisional tabernacle there seems to have been no ritual and no priesthood. It was pitched outside of the camp of Israel, and unto it the people went as to an oracle (Exod. 33. 7). 2. The Sinaitic tabernacle, erected in accordance with directions given to Moses by Jehovah. This is the tabernacle referred to in our present lesson. 3. The Davidic tabernacle, erected in Jerusalem by David for the reception of the ark (2 Sam. 6. 12). It appears from 1 Chron. 16. 39 and 2 Chron. 1. 3 that both the Sinaitic and the Davidic tabernacles existed for a short period together, the former located in Gibeon and the latter in Jerusalem.

Explanation: A Textual Study

2. The first month—Abib or Nisan, coinciding with the spring equinox. **The tabernacle of the tent meeting**—The tabernacle proper was within a larger tent, hence the name. **3. The ark of the testimony**—So called because containing the tables of stone with the commandments. **Screen the ark with the veil**—Shutting it out from the rest of the tabernacle within a smaller room known as the Holy of Holies (Exod. 26. 31-33). **4. The table**—A detailed description of this piece of temple furniture is found in Exod. 25. 10-30. **The things that are upon it**—Including the shewbread, bowls for incense, jugs with wine for libations, and cups. **5. The golden altar for incense**—Described in Exod. 30.1-6. **6. The altar of burnt offering** described in Exod. 27. 1-8. **Before the door of the tabernacle of the tent meeting**—That is, inside of the tent, between the tent door and the inner tabernacle. **7. The laver**—A basin used by officiating priests, made of the bronze mirrors of the women (Exod. 38. 8). We have no Scripture information regarding its shape or size. It is supposed to have been round, very large, and with a shallower basin beneath it, into which the water ran after being used. **8. Set up the court round about**—The court was an inclosed space about the tabernacle. Its dimensions were approximately 172 x 86 feet. **9. Hallow it**—Make it sacred by thus setting it apart for sacred purposes. **10. Sanctify . . . holy**—Both words in the original have the sense of setting apart. The ceremony of setting apart the priests for their especial duties is described in part in the next verse. **34. The cloud**—Indicating the presence of Jehovah. **Filled the tabernacle**—Penetrating into it from above. **38. Fire therein**—The light of Jehovah's presence. **In the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys**—That is, until they finally entered the promised land after their forty years of wandering.

Application: Holiness

I. Old Testament Usage of the Word.—1. The primary idea of the Hebrew root from which the word translated "holiness" comes is that of separation, or setting apart. Thus any holy object was not open to common or profane usage. 2. Used in the Old Testament only in a religious sense, (a) of Jehovah in his transcendent separation from the world: "I am God, and not man; the Holy One" (Hos. 11. 9). (b) Of man, both in an external sense, as the dedication of a person to an office, and in an ethical sense, referring to obedience to God. (c) Of places, things, seasons, which are holy by virtue of their peculiar purpose and their connection with the worship of Jehovah.

II. New Testament Usage of the Word.—In the New Testament the same fundamental conception is lifted to the highest ethical plane of separation from sin and from the world as sinful: "For the temple of God is holy, and such are ye" (1 Cor. 3. 17): "But like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also

holy in all manner of living" (1 Pet. 1. 15). The life of a Christian, therefore, is to be a life set apart for God in purity and righteousness.

For Further Discussion

What articles of furniture did the tabernacle contain, and what was the use of each? In what respects were the services of the temple symbolical? Point out in detail the symbolical meaning of some of the services. What ultimately took the place of the tabernacle in Jerusalem?

LESSON VI.—August 11

THE SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU. (Temperance Lesson.)—Lev. 10. 1-11

Read Lev. 8-10.

Memorize verse 9.

1. And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which he had not commanded them. 2. And there came forth fire from before Jehovah, and devoured them, and they died before Jehovah. 3. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that Jehovah spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. 4. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said unto them, Draw near, carry your brethren from before the sanctuary out of the camp. 5. So they drew near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moses had said. 6. And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons, Let not the hair of your heads go loose, neither rend your clothes; that ye die not, and that he be not wroth with all the congregation: but let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled. 7. And ye shall not go out from the door of the tent of meeting, lest ye die; for the anointing oil of Jehovah is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses. 8. And Jehovah spake unto Aaron, saying, 9. Drink no wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tent of meeting, that ye die not: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: 10 and that ye may make a distinction between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; 11 and that ye may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which Jehovah hath spoken unto them by Moses.

Golden Text.—Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whosoever erreth thereby is not wise. —Prov. 20. 1.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Sin of Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10. 1–11. *T.* Strange incense forbidden, Exod. 30. 1–10. *W.* Disobedience punished, 2 Chron. 26. 14–21. *Th.* Rules for priests, Ezek. 44. 15–21. *F.* Take heed! Luke 21. 29–36. *S.* True worship, John 4. 5–24. *S.* Children of light, 1 Thess. 5. 5–23.

Introduction: The Book of Leviticus

Leviticus, the third book of the Pentateuch, is so called because it describes the legislation concerning the priesthood and the Levites, their character, their consecration, and their duties. It also describes in detail the sacrifices, feasts, and fasts of the Jewish people, and is essentially a book of worship. While devoted largely to externals and the ceremony of religious observances, the deeper ethical aspects of religion are not entirely overlooked. These become especially prominent in chapters 17–26. The laws set forth in Leviticus are grouped as follows: 1. Laws of sacrifice, chapters 1–7; 2. Consecration of the priesthood, chapters 8–10; 3. Concerning the clean and the unclean, chapters 11–16; 4. Laws of holiness, chapters 17–26.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Offered strange fire before Jehovah—They disregarded the divinely established order, bringing fire of their own kindling into the sanctuary. For the law which they transgressed compare Lev. 16. 12. **2. Devoured them**—In the sense of killed. That they were not consumed is evident from verses 4 and 5, in which their brethren are commanded to carry their bodies from the sanctuary. **3. I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me**—Referring directly to the priests in their peculiar relation to the sanctuary. For an explicit command on this point compare Exod. 19. 22; 29. 44; Lev. 8. 35. **And Aaron held his peace**—A grief-stricken father, resigned to the righteous judgment of Jehovah. **5. Carried them in their coats out of the camp**—That is for burial. The burial of the priestly garments along with the bodies of the priests was a sign that they too were polluted by the sin of the men who wore them. The severe and appalling judgment could not fail to bring a solemn lesson of warning to both priests and people. **6. Let not the hair of your heads go loose**—According to several ancient versions this clause reads, *Uncover not your heads*. **Neither rend your clothes**—In recognition of the justness of the punishment inflicted all signs of mourning were to be avoided. **Bewail the burning which Jehovah hath kindled**—The whole people are commanded to comfort the family of Aaron. **7. Lest ye die**—The prohibition not to leave the sanctuary imposed upon the priests must not be considered as absolute. (Comp. Lev. 21. 10–12.) The sense of the command is that they were not to come into contact with secular affairs or abandon the service of the tabernacle. **The anointing oil**—Oil used in the ceremony of

consecrating the priests to their office. **8. Drink no wine nor strong drink**—This special command given in this connection seems to imply that what had occurred was in some way connected with the use of strong drink; hence we infer that Nadab and Abihu were under the influence of strong drink when they disregarded the laws of the sanctuary and offered strange fire upon Jehovah's altar. This is not absolutely a necessary inference, since it is quite possible that the command might have nothing whatever to do with the preceding events, but the probabilities seem to be in favor of the interpretation suggested. **10. That ye may make a distinction**—These words lend support to the inference that the sons of Aaron had erred through wine, and that they, while under the influence of wine and strong drink, had not been able thus to distinguish **between the holy and the common.** **11. That ye may teach the children of Israel**—The twofold office of the priesthood is indicated in Deut. 33. 10, which reads, "They shall teach Jacob thine ordinances, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt offering upon thine altar."

Application: Why Men Drink

I. Reasons Often Given.—1. For health sake, or at the advice of a physician. 2. As a needed stimulus for hard physical exertion or exacting mental work. 3. To keep warm in winter, or cool in summer. 4. To keep awake or to make one sleep well. 5. To demonstrate one's independence, or for fear others will ridicule or criticise. How strangely contradictory are some of the reasons given, how utterly false are others! **II. True Reasons.**—1. For pleasure. Most men drink solely to gratify appetite. If this fact were but generally admitted it would be a great step toward convincing men generally of the further fact that strong drink is not only not essential to health, but in the end—that is, where habitually indulged in—always a positive harm. 2. From ignorance. Society as a whole is woefully blind to the evils of intemperance, and to the unspeakable curse brought upon humanity by strong drink. On the part of the individual ignorance is for the most part wilful ignorance. The facts are unwelcome, and consequently ignored until they fade entirely from consciousness.

For Further Discussion

In what twofold sense is selfishness at the root of the drink evil? Is there any real reason why saloons should exist? How can the members of this class help in some definite way to rid the town, city, county, and state of saloons? Where begin? How? When?

LESSON VII.—August 18

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.—Lev. 16. 5-22

Read Lev. 16 and 17; Heb. 9.

Memorize verse 2.

5. And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two he-goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6. And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself, and for his house. 7. And he shall take the two goats, and set them before Jehovah at the door of the tent of meeting. 8. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for Jehovah, and the other lot for Azazel. 9. And Aaron shall present the goat upon which the lot fell for Jehovah, and offer him for a sin offering. 10. But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be set alive before Jehovah, to make atonement for him, to send him away for Azazel into the wilderness. 11. And Aaron shall present the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which is for himself. 12. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from off the altar before Jehovah, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: 13 and he shall put the incense upon the fire before Jehovah, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not: 14 and he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat on the east; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times. 15. Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with his blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: 16 and he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins: and so shall he do for the tent of meeting, that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses. 17. And there shall be no man in the tent of meeting when he goeth in to make atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. 18. And he shall go out unto the altar that is before Jehovah, and make atonement for it, and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. 19. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel. 20. And when he hath made an end of atoning for the holy place, and the tent of meeting, and the altar, he shall present the live goat: 21 and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man

that is in readiness into the wilderness: 22 and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Golden Text.—Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him.—Heb. 7. 25.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Day of Atonement, Lev. 16. 5–14. *T.* The Day of Atonement, Lev. 16. 15–22. *W.* A Sabbath of rest, Lev. 23. 23–32. *Th.* Our atonement, Rom. 5. 1–11. *F.* Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5. 14–21. *S.* Redemption by blood, Col. 1. 9–22. *S.* Putting away sin, Heb. 9. 16–28.

Introduction: The Day of Atonement

In the solemn services of the Day of Atonement the whole system of symbolic worship described in the Old Testament reached its culmination. This greatest of festive days on the Hebrew calendar occurred in the fall of the year, during our month of September. Its services seemed to have been a condensation of sacrifices and ceremonies carried out more elaborately and in detail during the preceding months. The best interpretation of the profound spiritual significance of the Day of Atonement as foreshadowing the perfect atonement made by Christ for the sin of the world is given in the ninth chapter of the book of Hebrews, to which we shall refer again in our Application, below.

Explanation: A Textual Study

5. Sin offering—Exacted of the people as a penalty or offering for sin committed, enjoined Lev. 4. The animal presented in the sin offering varied according to the position and rank of the person bringing it and the nature of the offense committed. **Burnt offering**—So called because entirely consumed by fire on the altar. Its symbolical significance was that of the entire consecration of the worshiper to Jehovah. **7. The tent of meeting**—The tabernacle. **8. Cast lots upon the two goats**—Two pieces of gold, one inscribed with the words "For Jehovah" and the other "For Azazel," but in other respects exactly similar, were cast into an urn, well shaken together, and then placed by the officiating priest, without looking at them, one on the head of each of the two goats. In this manner the fate of each was decided. **Azazel**—This word occurs nowhere else in the canonical books of the Old Testament. Its meaning, therefore, is uncertain, and has been much disputed. **12. Sweet incense . . . within the veil**—The verses which follow describe the ceremony of purification of the tabernacle, including the Holy of Holies, by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificial victim. **13. The mercy seat**—The lid covering the ark and ornamented with the figure of the cherubim. **18, 19. Make atonement for it**—The sanctuary itself with all of its articles of furniture are conceived of as

polluted by the approach of sinful worshipers, as is indicated by the wording of the next verse: **And he shall . . . cleanse it . . . from the uncleannesses of the children of Israel.** **22. Bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land**—A symbolical object lesson intended to set forth the idea of the separation of the worshiper from his guilt by means of the sacrifice offered. **Let go the goat in the wilderness**—Later, in the time of Christ, this animal was led to the summit of a high cliff, from which it was cast down and killed.

Application: The New Covenant

I. Promised.—“Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, . . . not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt” (Jer. 31, 31, 32). “For if that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second . . . A new covenant” (Heb. 8, 7-13). **II. Symbolized in the Tabernacle.**—The writer to the Hebrews points out in detail this symbolical significance: “But Christ through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, and through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” “For if the blood of goats . . . sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9, 11-14.) **III. Ratified in the death of Christ.**—“The mediator of a new covenant, a death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant” (9, 15). “Christ, once offered to bear the sins of many” (9, 28). The whole argument of the apostle is given in 8, 1 to 10, 18, and should be carefully read in connection with to-day’s lesson.

For Further Discussion

In how many different ways does the Old Testament emphasize the idea of sin? What is the real significance of this Old Testament emphasis on sin? In how many different ways does the Old Testament foreshadow redemption from sin?

LESSON VIII.—August 25

ISRAEL JOURNEYING TO CANAAN.—Num. 10, 11-13, 29-36

Read Num. 10, 11 to 12, 16. Memorize verses 35, 36.

11. And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of the testimony. **12.** And the children of Israel set forward

according to their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud abode in the wilderness of Paran. **13.** And they first took their journey according to the commandment of Jehovah by Moses. **29.** And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which Jehovah said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for Jehovah hath spoken good concerning Israel. **30.** And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred. **31.** And he said, Leave us not I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou shalt be to us instead of eyes. **32.** And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what good soever Jehovah shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. **33.** And they set forward from the mount of Jehovah three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah went before them three days' journey, to seek out a resting-place for them. **34.** And the cloud of Jehovah was over them by day, when they set forward from the camp. **35.** And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. **36.** And when it rested, he said, Return, O Jehovah, unto the ten thousands of the thousands of Israel.

Golden Text.—And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light.—Exod. 13. 21.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Israel Journeying to Canaan, Num. 10. 11–13, 29–36. *T.* The cloud and fire, Num. 9. 15–23. *W.* Manifold mercies, Neh. 9. 7–19. *Th.* Led by God, Psa. 107. 1–15. *F.* God's great goodness, Isa. 63. 7–14. *S.* Mercies forgotten, Psa. 78. 12–25. *S.* "He leadeth me," Psa. 23.

Introduction: The Book of Numbers

The book of Numbers is so called because of two numberings of the people, at the beginning and at the end of their long wanderings in the wilderness, therein recorded. The narrative covers a period of about thirty-eight years, and in its vivid portrayal of the sufferings and the chastisement of the children of Israel it images the wretched loss a soul suffers by forfeiting the promise of God through unbelief and willful disobedience. The first verse of our lesson text (Num. 10. 11) begins the second main section of the book, which extends to 21. 9, and which describes the northward march of the Israelites from Sinai, and also their wanderings and marches during practically the whole of the forty years of their wilderness sojourn. Special emphasis is placed on the events of the first few and again on the closing months of the journey. This section and the period which it covers will engage our attention for three successive lessons.

Explanation: A Textual Study

11. The second year—After their departure from Egypt. **12. Out of the wilderness of Sinai**—Where they had tarried the greater part of an entire year. **Abode**—Stopped. **The wilderness of Paran**—Several days' journey northeast of Sinai. It was from this point that the spies were dispatched into Palestine, which lay almost directly to the north. Here also the greater part of the remaining thirty-eight years of their wanderings were spent. **29. Hobab, the son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law**—Called also Jethro (Exod. 3. 1; 4. 18; 18. 1-12.) **Come thou with us, and we will do thee good**—The invitation is to share in the prosperity promised to Israel by Jehovah. **30. To mine own land, and to my kindred**—These were farther to the east, beyond the Arabah, which extended from the southern point of the Dead Sea to the gulf. **31. Thou shalt be to us instead of eyes**—The guidance of Jehovah did not make unnecessary the exercise of human judgment, and Hobab, who was familiar with all that region, is invited to become their guide in the wilderness and select for them suitable camping places. **33. Mount of Jehovah**—Sinai. **Went before them**—Carried by the Levites. **Three days' journey**—Not separated from the people by a three days' journey, but going before them during a three days' march. **35. Set forward**—Out of the wilderness of Sinai. (Comp. verse 12 above.)

Application: "Come Thou with Us"

I. A Peculiar but Not an Exclusive People.—1. A peculiar people. "Thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 14. 2). "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6. 17). "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2. 9). 2. But not an exclusive people. It is the duty of Christians to bring others into this peculiar covenant relation with God. Even under the old dispensation special provision was made for receiving proselytes into the Hebrew nation. **II. To Whom Extend the Invitation.**—1. To every nation and individual. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28. 19). "And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22. 17). 2. Leaders needed. While seeking to save all, the church should be diligently and specially on the lookout for strong men to win them to Christ and train them for Christian leadership. This duty neglected, the performance of minor tasks is in a large measure futile.

For Further Discussion

The vital importance of leadership and guidance in the Christian church. Similarities between the wilderness journey of the Israelites and the Christian's journey

through life in each of the following points: Difficulties, temptations, trials of faith, human and divine guidance, special providences, incidental joys, character training.

LESSON IX.—September 1

THE TWO REPORTS OF THE SPIES.—Num. 13.
17-20, 23-33.

Read Num. 13 and 14.

Memorize verses 30, 31.

17. And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way by the South, and go up into the hill-country: 18 and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwell therein, whether they are strong or weak, whether they are few or many; 19 and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it is good or bad; and what cities they are that they dwell in, whether in camps, or in strongholds; 20 and what the land is, whether it is fat or lean, whether there is wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. Now the time was the time of the first-ripe grapes. 23. And they came unto the valley of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it upon a staff between two; *they brought also of the pomegranates, and of the figs.* 24. That place was called the valley of Eshcol, because of the cluster which the children of Israel cut down from thence. 25. And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days. 26. And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27. And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us; and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. 28. Howbeit the people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, *and* very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. 29. Amalek dwelleth in the land of the South: and the Hittite, and the Jebusite, and the Amorite, dwell in the hill-country; and the Canaanite dwelleth by the sea, and along by the side of the Jordan. 30. And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. 31. But the men that went up with him said, We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. 32. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had spied out unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. 33. And there we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who come of the Nephilim: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.

Golden Text.—Jehovah is with us: fear them not.—Num. 14. 9.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Two Reports of the Spies, Num. 13. 1–3, 17–25. *T.* The Two Reports of the Spies, Num. 13. 26–33. *W.* Unbelief and sorrow, Num. 14. 1–10. *Th.* Result of unbelief, Num. 14. 26–38. *F.* Moses's reminder, Deut. 1. 19–36. *S.* Disobedience and defeat, Deut. 1. 37–46. *S.* Unseen protectors, 2 Kings 6. 8–17.

Introduction: Intervening Events

Several events of interest and importance intervene between this and our last lesson. The murmurings of the people against Moses and against Jehovah on account of a lack of meat led to the sending of quail in super-abundance. Incidentally, we have a description of manna and the way in which it was prepared for eating (Num. 11. 7–9). The burden of directing the whole people single-handed being too great for Moses, seventy elders were chosen at the direction of Jehovah to assist him. To them is given of the same spirit which is upon Moses, and they become his assistants in matters of administration. Later Miriam and Aaron, apparently displeased with the marriage of Moses to a Cushite woman, speak against him and are punished by Jehovah, Miriam being stricken with leprosy, from which she is healed only at the earnest intercession of Moses. At the command of Jehovah, Moses chooses men, one from each tribe, and sends them to spy out the land of Canaan, their starting point being the camp of Israel in the wilderness of Paran, near the southern borders of the Promised Land.

Explanation: A Textual Study

17. Moses sent them—Twelve men, one representative from each tribe with the exception of the tribe of Levi. The number twelve was made full by the fact that from Joseph had descended the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. **Canaan**—The original meaning of the word “Canaan” is *lowlands*, the name being given to the coast land along the Mediterranean and the Jordan valley more particularly. **The hill-country**—West of the Dead Sea in the province which later became the inheritance of Judah and Ephraim and Benjamin.

20. Fat or lean—In the sense of *fertile or barren*. **The time of the first-ripe grapes**—Midsummer, about July. **23. The valley of Eshcol**—A fertile wady with vineyards and orchards near Hebron. **26. Kadesh**—Kadesh-barnea, next to Sinai the most important station of the exodus journey and the center of operations during thirty-eight years. The place where the tabernacle stood, where Moses and the elders dwelt, and from which center dwellings of the hosts of the Israelites radiated in every direction. **27. Floweth with milk and honey**—An Oriental figurative expression describing the great fertility of the land. Compare the promises in Exod. 3. 8, 17; 13. 5; Deut. 1. 25. **28. The children**

of Anak—A giant race of men, though probably not a separate people or tribe. They dwelt at Hebron and westward, and their descendants seem to have been found among Amorites, Perizzites, and Philistines alike.

29. Amalek—The name of an Arabian tribe. **Hittite**—Compare Introduction to lesson for March 17.

Jebusite—A local tribe whose capital city was Jebus, also called Jerusalem. The Jebusites were not dislodged from their stronghold till the time of David.

Amorite—A very ancient race not Semites. **33. Nephilim**—Superhuman beings analogous to the demigods of Gentile nations. Mentioned also in Gen. 6. 4, where we read,

"The Nephilim were in the earth in those days." **As grasshoppers**—So insignificant in size compared with the sons of Anak whom they had met.

Application: "Able to Overcome"

I. Knowing the State of the Enemy.—1. Not always essential. In our personal struggle with sin it is well sometimes not to spy out the enemy's country. In youth it is more essential to know one's resources and opportunities for positive good. The overcoming of evil tendencies by the crowding-out process—that is, by filling the mind completely with better things—is more effective than the direct antagonism of sin. 2. When essential. In the cause of public reform such knowledge of the enemy's strength is indispensable. Underestimating the same often leads to failure, and failure to discouragement and cessation of effort.

II. Knowing Our Own Weakness.—There are two possible results of such knowledge, namely: 1. Discouragement and abandonment of effort and a surrender to evil. 2. Caution, humility, renewed determination, and concentration of energy and effort at strategic points.

III. Taking God into Account.—1. This is the proper way to deal with the great enemy of our salvation, for it is the only way which can bring assurance of victory and a renewal of courage. 2 Points to the way of escape, prompting to prayer and faith. 3. Truth and righteousness must ultimately conquer.

For Further Discussion

Purpose of sending forth spies. Was it essential for Israel to know the facts ascertained by the spies? Was Caleb alone in encouraging the people to proceed? How was he rewarded? Is it possible always to win in the conflict with sin? What application of this lesson can be made to cases of temperance reform? To municipal and other reform movements?

LESSON X.—September 8

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.—Num. 21. 1-9

Read Num. 20 and 21.

Memorize verse 9.

1. And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the South, heard tell that Israel came by the way of

Atharim; and he fought against Israel, and took some of them captive. 2. And Israel vowed a vow unto Jehovah, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities. 3. And Jehovah hearkened to the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them and their cities: and the name of the place was called Hormah. 4. And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. 5. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, and there is no water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6. And Jehovah sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people: and much people of Israel died. 7. And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against Jehovah, and against thee; pray unto Jehovah, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. 9. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard: and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, he lived.

Golden Text.—As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.—John 3. 14, 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Brazen Serpent, Num. 21. 1–9. *T.* The heart not right, Psa. 78. 32–42. *W.* Pray for us! 1 Sam. 12. 18–25. *Th.* The serpent destroyed, 2 Kings, 18. 1–7. *F.* For an admonition, 1 Cor. 10. 1–12. *S.* The look of faith, Isa. 45. 20–25. *S.* Life by faith, John 3. 10–17.

Introduction: A Severe Judgment

Disheartened by the report of the spies, the Israelites murmured again against Jehovah and his chosen leader, Moses, even going so far as to wish themselves dead in the wilderness or in Egypt. The repeated efforts of Joshua and Caleb to renew their courage and their confidence in Jehovah, whose power to help them in the conquest of the Promised Land they emphasized, proved of no avail. The rebellion against Jehovah was all but unanimous among the people, and the judgment of Jehovah was correspondingly severe. None of those who murmured against him were permitted to enter the Promised Land. A whole generation was to perish in the desert. Among the intervening events mentioned in chapters 14–20 are repeated murmurings of the people; a detailed statement of the tithes of the Levites and the priests, and the account of Miriam's death. We are

to think of the people as still in the desert of Paran, where a similar murmuring gives rise to the punishment of Jehovah spoken of in to-day's lesson.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. **Arad**—A city sixteen miles south of Hebron, the site of which is still marked by a mound of buried ruins.
- Atharim**—The Authorized Version here translates *the spies*, the meaning of the word in the original being very uncertain. Some recent scholars believe the word to be derived from a root meaning *tracks*, and that the intended meaning is *the traveled road* or *caravan route*.
2. **Utterly destroy**—Hebrew, *devote*. The same word is sometimes translated *consecrate*.
3. **Hormah**—Mentioned also in Josh. 12. 14, together with Arad, as one of thirty-one royal cities taken by Joshua. It was well to the south on the border of Edom, and became part of the inheritance of Simeon.
4. **Mount Hor**—The place of Aaron's death (Num. 33. 38). The modern Jebel Haroun is identified as the site of the ancient Hor, and among the Arabs is still held sacred as the sepulcher of Aaron.
- To compass the land of Edom**—The name Edom means literally *red land*, and is derived from the red color of the sandstone cliffs to the south and southeast of the Dead Sea. Edom embraced the ranges of Mount Seir on either side of the Arabah, or depression which runs southward from the Dead Sea to the head of the Gulf of Akabah.
6. **Fiery serpents**—So called either from the burning sensation accompanying their bite or from their color, probably the former.
8. **Make thee a fiery serpent**—Some ancient manuscripts add the words "of bronze."
9. **A standard**—That is, a pole such as would be used to-day in carrying a flag or pennant.
9. **Brass**—Not the alloy metal called brass which we know. The abundance of bronze, which is an alloy of copper and tin, and which was common among ancient nations in both Asia and Europe, may be the metal intended.

Application: A Symbol of the Cross

"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up" (John 3. 14).

- I. **A Sign of Sin.**—1. The brazen serpent reminds us of Israel's long category of transgressions and murmurings. 2. In somewhat the same way the cross on Calvary is a symbol of the sin of the race. The sin of a single individual would have required the sacrifice made on Calvary. The sins of the whole world could require no greater.
- II. **A Sign of Love.**—1. Through a consciousness of sin, man comes to a knowledge and appreciation of God's infinite love. 2. The consequences of sin awaken conscience and a sense of the justice of God's punishment. Then it is that the cross, representing a sacrifice on the part of God prompted by his infinite love, becomes a symbol of that love.
- III. **A Sign of Victory.**—Faith in the mercy and love of Jehovah transformed the brazen serpent into a symbol of victory over sin to the believing

Israelite. So also a right appreciation of God's mercy and love to a sinful race and to the individual sinner transforms the cross of Calvary into a symbol of victory. "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" (1 Cor. 15. 55.) "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John 17. 3).

For Further Discussion

What period of time intervenes between the events of our last lesson and those of this one? What important events intervene? Did Israel always profit by the judgment of Jehovah? Could God's love be adequately manifested to man apart from a revelation at the same time of his wrath against sin?

LESSON XI.—September 15

MOSES PLEADING WITH ISRAEL.—Deut. 6. 1-15

Read Deut. 5 and 6.

Memorize verses 4-7.

1. Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; 2 that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 3. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised unto thee in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4. Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: 5 and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; 7 and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. 9. And thou shalt write them upon the doorposts of thy house, and upon thy gates. 10. And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God shall bring thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee, great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, 11 and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and cisterns hewn out, which thou hewedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt eat and be full; 12 then beware lest thou forget Jehovah, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 13. thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God; and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his

name. **14.** Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the peoples that are round about you; **15** for Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is a jealous God; lest the anger of Jehovah thy God be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Golden Text.—Beware lest thou forget Jehovah.—Deut. 6. 12.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Moses Pleading with Israel, Deut. 6. 1-15. *T.* “For our good,” Deut. 6. 16-25. *W.* Remember to do! Deut. 8. 1-10. *Th.* Lest ye forget, Deut. 8. 11-20. *F.* In the heart, Deut. 11. 18-28. *S.* Hearers and doers, James 1. 19-27. *S.* “Keep my commandments,” John 15. 8-17.

Introduction: Deuteronomy

The name Deuteronomy comes from the Greek word meaning *repetition (copy) of the law*. It came to be applied to the fifth book of the Old Testament canon because of its use in the Greek translation of that book, chapter 17, verse 18, where the phrase “a copy of this law” occurs. The book contains the last utterances of Moses on the plains of Moab, on the border of the Promised Land, just preceding his death. The utterances of Moses contained in Deuteronomy comprise three main discourses, namely: 1. An historical review of Israel’s life in the wilderness (1. 6 to 4. 43). 2. A longer discourse partly historical, partly hortatory, and partly concerned with legislation (4. 44 to 27. 26). 3. An exhortation to constancy in adherence to the covenant of Jehovah, and an earnest presentation of the alternatives of obedience or disobedience to Jehovah (chapters 29, 30). In the remaining chapters, 31-34, are presented the farewell of Moses, a record of his delivering the law to the priests, his commission to Joshua, the song and blessing of Moses, and an account of his death. Our lesson to-day is taken from the very heart and center of the first of the three discourses referred to above.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. The land whither ye go over to possess it—Promised in 3. 8. This verse and the two following point out the benefits which Israel may hope to receive if obedient to the commandments now about to be given.
2. Thou and thy son—From the nation the writer passes in thought to the individual member of the nation.
4. Jehovah our God is one Jehovah—Or, *Jehovah our God, Jehovah is one; or, Jehovah is our God, Jehovah is one; or, Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone.* A great declaration of monotheism, both in the sense that there is only one God and also that that one existing God is truly one. “And Jehovah shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall Jehovah be one, and his name one” (Zech. 14. 9). **5. Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God**—The book of Deuteronomy places peculiar emphasis on love of God as the fundamental motive of human action, and

as a duty in grateful response to the manifold and undeserved mercies which God has bestowed upon his people; hence the exhortation, **with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.** These two verses (4 and 5) contain the heart and kernel of the whole Deuteronomic code. It was not by accident that Jesus, when questioned as to the "first commandment of all" (Matt. 22. 37; Mark 12. 29), and to the fundamental condition for admittance into life eternal (Luke 10. 27), referred his questioners in both cases to this same text, with which daily usage had doubtless already made them familiar. **6. These words**—Those just spoken which contained the essence of the whole law. **Shall be upon thy heart**—In thy mind as a subject for constant meditation. **7. Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children**—This exhortation is further emphasized by pointing out the manner of giving this instruction. **8. Bind them for a sign upon thy hand**—In later times small scrolls of parchment, on which the words of Deut. 6. 4–9, and other passages were inscribed, were inclosed in small wooden cases and bound with leather thongs to the forehead and left arm at the time when the "shema," or selected portion of the law for daily recitation, was repeated. These small cases with inclosed scrolls were known as phylacteries. **9. Write them upon the doorposts of thy house**—This commandment gave rise in later times to the custom of attaching to the doorpost of every Jewish home a small metal cylinder inclosing a small piece of parchment inscribed with Deut. 6. 4–9 and 11. 13–21. Every pious Jew passing through the doorway of his house touches this cylinder, known as "mezuzah," or kisses his finger, at the same time reciting Psa. 121. 8: "Jehovah will keep thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore." **11. Cisterns hewn out**—In which to store the water of the winter rains during the long dry season of summer, such as are still common in Palestine.

Application: Concerning Religious Instruction

I. *Essential Elements.*—1. The beginning of wisdom, "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111. 10). There is no religious instruction worth while that does not start out with this fundamental acknowledgment. Knowledge of God's laws without reverence is worse than useless. "There is no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3. 18). Whatever else may be accomplished or left unaccomplished, in the religious instruction in our homes and our churches, reverence for God and his laws must be inculcated by precept and example. 2. The sum total of the law. The quintessence of the whole law is *love*. In the words of Jesus, the commandments may be summed up as follows: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbor as thyself" (Luke 10. 27). In the words of Paul (Rom. 13. 10), the same thought is expressed: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law." II. *Method of Progress.*—1. Attention the first essential. "Hear, O Israel" (v. 4).

2. Meditation. "These words shall be upon thy heart" (v. 6). 3. Conversation. "Talk of them" (v. 7). 4. Repetition. "When thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (v. 7). 5. Aids to memory. "Bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes" (v. 8). III. *Responsibility.* —The responsibility for religious instruction of young and old is: 1. National. Israel as a nation is addressed. 2. Parental. "Teach them diligently unto thy children" (v. 7). 3. Individual and personal. "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exod. 32. 33).

For Further Discussion

Give the historical setting of Deuteronomy as indicated in verses 1–5 of the first chapter. Where were the Israelites at the time the events described in the book took place? How much time had intervened between these events and those of our last lesson? Point out the things that you consider of essential importance in the religious instruction of young and old as carried on in the Sunday school.

LESSON XII.—September 22

THE DEATH OF MOSES.—Deut. 34. 1–12

Read Deut. 31–34.

Memorize verses 10–12.

1. And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And Jehovah showed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the hinder sea, 3 and the South, and the Plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar. 4. And Jehovah said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. 5. So Moses the servant of Jehovah died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of Jehovah. 6. And he buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day. 7. And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8. And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping in the mourning for Moses were ended. 9. And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses. 10. And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face, 11 in all the signs and the wonders, which Jehovah sent him to do in the land of

Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, 12 and in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel.

Golden Text.—Precious in the sight of Jehovah is the death of his saints.—Psa. 116. 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* A sight of Canaan, Deut. 32. 44–52. *T.* The Death of Moses, Deut. 34. 1–12. *W.* The fault of Moses, Num. 20. 1–13. *Th.* Moses's desire, Deut. 3. 21–28. *F.* “Face to face,” Exod. 33. 7–14. *S.* The prayer of Moses, Psa. 90. *S.* Ready! 2 Tim. 4. 1–8.

Introduction: Deuteronomy (Continued)

It seems probable that the original book of Deuteronomy was not so large as the present canonical book. Old Testament scholars agree in assigning chapters 5–28 to this original work. The date of the book of Deuteronomy in its present form cannot be determined with certainty. The laws which it sets forth regulating national worship seem to represent a later stage in the history of Israel than those given in Exod. 20–23, and it seems probable that Deuteronomy represents an expansion and development of that more ancient code. Many Old Testament scholars assign its composition to the period intervening between the accession of Ahaz and the literary activity of Jeremiah. “In language, in thought, and in character it is most easily understood as the composition of one who lived in the seventh century, and who sought, by a dramatic use of the last words of Moses, to recall his countrymen to a holier life and a purer service of Jehovah” (Hastings's Bib. Dict.).

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. The plains of Moab—The word translated “plains” may also be rendered *steps*. The open plain referred to lies between the Jordan and the mountains of Moab, northeast of the Dead Sea. **Mount Nebo . . . Pisgah**—Probably two designations for the same place. Nebo is traditionally associated with one of the many mountain ridges east of the Dead Sea, still known as Neba. The name Pisgah has not been preserved. **Showed him all the land of Gilead**—Far to the north on the east side of the Jordan. **Unto Dan**—Near the foot of Mount Hermon, often mentioned as the extreme northern limit of Canaan. Its more ancient name was Leshen or Laish, known to-day as Tell-el Kadi. **2. The hinder sea**—That is, the *western* or Mediterranean Sea, not itself visible from Neba. **3. Jericho**—Known to-day as er-Riha, still a village of some three hundred inhabitants, situated in the Jordan valley just northwest of the Dead Sea, nine hundred feet below sea level. The ancient city was strong and well fortified, but was utterly destroyed by the Israelites on entering Canaan. **Zoar**—One of a group of five cities to which Sodom and Gomorrah belonged. It was situated south of the Dead

Sea. 4. **The land which I sware unto Abraham unto Iaaac, and unto Jacob**—Comp. Gen. 12. 7; 26. 3; 28. 13. 6. **He buried him**—The Hebrew of this phrase may also be translated *he was buried*, or, *they buried him*, but the context clearly shows that the translation given in the text is the correct one, the antecedent of "he" being "Jehovah." 8. **Wept for Moses . . . thirty days**—As they had done for Aaron (Num. 20. 29). 9. **Moses had laid his hands upon him**—Appointing him to be his successor at the direct command of Jehovah (Num. 27. 18-22). 10. **Whom Jehovah knew**—That is, took notice of, deemed worthy of his self-revealing friendship and guidance. **Face to face**—In personal intercourse. 11, 12. These two verses set forth the preëminence of Moses in other respects.

Application: Moses in Retrospect

1. *Early Life and Training.*—1. His name and its significance (Exod. 2. 10). 2. His training as Hebrew child, as Egyptian prince, and in the desert solitude (Exod. 2. 3-25). II. *As a Popular Leader.*—We note in this connection, 1. His unwavering steadfastness. 2. His calmness in every crisis of government. 3. His patience under trial. 4. His absolute devotion to the highest things always; and, 5. His sense of utter dependence upon God. III. *As a Religious Teacher and Lawgiver.*—1. His impartiality and justice in administration. 2. His fidelity to every trust committed to him by Jehovah. His enthusiasm and zeal for absolute obedience to the divine commands. IV. *In His Human Weakness.*—1. His rash enthusiasm of youth (Exod. 2. 7-14). 2. His sin of petulance (Num. 20. 11-13).

For Further Discussion

In what respects was Moses specially fitted for his lifework? In what phase of that work does he appear greatest? What character trait of his seems to you most worthy of our emulation? What constitutes a call from God for special service?

LESSON XIII.—September 29.—Review

Read Psa. 90.

Golden Text.—Jehovah is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness.—Psa. 103. 8.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* God Feeds Israel in the Wilderness, Exod. 16. 1-15. *T.* The Ten Commandments, Exod. 20. 1-17. *W.* The Golden Calf, Exod. 32. 1-6, 30-35. *Th.* The Day of Atonement, Lev. 16. 5-22. *F.* The Two Reports of the Spies, Num. 13, 17-33. *S.* The Brazen Serpent, Num. 21, 1-9. *S.* Moses Pleading with Israel, Deut. 6. 1-15.

Introduction

As noted in our Preview to the lessons of this Quarter, these lessons cover practically the period of the exodus journey. The events actually described, however, belong to the first and last months of that long period. As in previous reviews, we shall indicate for brief discussion during this lesson hour a number of questions which together are intended to cover the important points in the studies for the Quarter.

General Review Summary

About what two important centers do the events of the wilderness journey recorded in the Old Testament group themselves? Locate Sinai, Kadesh-barnea, the Wilderness of Sin, Paran, the plains of Moab, Mount Nebo. What important events occurred at Sinai? How many versions of the Decalogue are preserved for us in the Old Testament? How do these versions differ from each other? Which is the older of the two? To what extent was Aaron responsible for the idolatry of the Israelites at Sinai? Describe the tabernacle and its furnishings. Indicate the symbolical significance of its sacrifices and other religious observances. What meaning had the Day of Atonement for the Israelites, and what was its profounder symbolical significance? Cite three instances of murmuring on the part of the people against Jehovah. How in each case were they punished? From what direction did the Israelites approach the Promised Land? From what direction did they finally enter? What caused them to follow the circuitous route which they chose? Enumerate some of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine whom the Israelites found there on entering. To which of these were the Israelites related? Name ten important persons mentioned in the lessons of this Quarter. Give some important fact concerning each. What character traits of Moses have been emphasized in our study? How does Moses compare in greatness with other national leaders in the world's history?

The Golden Text

The truth of our Golden Text is most evident as we reflect upon Jehovah's dealings with Israel during the long years of their desert pilgrimage. Again and again did Israel murmur and rebel against Jehovah, and again and again was Jehovah merciful and gracious to his people, renewing his covenant with them, and continuing to guide and protect them. But the truth of the text is still more evident when, like the psalmist who wrote it, we reflect upon God's dealings with us. Such reflection and self-examination will call to mind the many instances of willful disobedience on our part when God might have dealt severely with us had he not been infinitely merciful and gracious. We also recognize his plenteousness in mercy when we seek to number the blessings which he has bestowed upon us and with which our lives are at present surrounded. The recognition on our part of his mercy and goodness should bring with it a sense of unworthiness and a desire to be more nearly worthy of his blessings in the future.

FOURTH QUARTER

Preview: The Period of the Judges

Our lessons for the coming three months, with the exception of the World's Temperance Lesson for Sunday, November 24, will be devoted to a study of the period of the judges of Israel. This period extends from the time of Joshua, who was the first of Israel's judges, to the time of Samuel, the last of the judges. No certain dates for the beginning and end or for the duration of this period can be fixed. In general it may be said that the length of the period was about two hundred years, and that it terminated within fifty years of B. C. 1000. The books of Joshua, Judges, and part of First Samuel record the events of this portion of Israelitish history. In the map intended to accompany the lessons of this Quarter, given on another page, will be found a graphic summary of the campaigns against the enemies who troubled Israel on every side during this long period. Among these campaigns three stand out in the history with especial prominence. They are: 1. The union of the tribes against Sisera and the Canaanites; 2. The campaign against the Midianites; 3. The appearance of and contest with the Philistines. To these and other important campaigns, together with a study of more peaceful events, we shall devote our attention during the three months before us.

LESSON I.—October 6

JOSHUA, ISRAEL'S NEW LEADER.—Josh. 1. 1-11

Read Num. 27. 12-23; Josh. 1. Memorize verse 7.

1. Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of Jehovah, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, 2. Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel. 3. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it, as I spake unto Moses. 4. From the wilderness, and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your border. 5. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6. Be strong and of good courage; for thou shalt cause this people to inherit the land which I

sware unto their fathers to give them. 7. Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest. 8. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate thereon day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. 9. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage; be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for Jehovah thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. 10. Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, 11. Pass through the midst of the camp, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye are to pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which Jehovah your God giveth you to possess it.

Golden Text.—I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.—
Josh. 1. 5.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joshua, Israel's New Leader, Josh. 1. 1–11. *T.* Loyalty of the people, Josh. 1. 12–18. *W.* Chosen by God, Num. 27. 15–23. *Th.* The book of the law, Deut. 17. 14–20. Reading the law, Josh. 8. 30–35. *S.* Obedience and trust, Prov. 3. 1–10. *S.* Keeping the commandment, 1 John 2. 1–8.

Introduction: The Book of Joshua

This book receives its name, not from its author, but from the hero whose life and leadership it portrays. In the Hebrew canon of the Old Testament the book of Joshua is the first of a group of writings known as "The Earlier Prophets" and comprising Joshua, Judges, 1st and 2nd Samuel, and 1st and 2nd Kings. Of the twenty-four chapters which the book contains, the first twelve record the history of Israel from the death of Moses through the period of the conquest of western Palestine; the next nine chapters record the division of the land among the tribes of Israel; while in the remaining three chapters supplementary events of importance are recorded, including the account of Joshua's last days, death, and burial. In many ways the book of Joshua completes and supplements the narrative of the latter part of the Pentateuch, of whose promises and obligations it records the fulfillment. Its close relation to the Pentateuch has caused some biblical scholars to suggest a new grouping of the Old Testament books so as to include Joshua in a first group of six books, which group is not infrequently referred to as the Hexateuch.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. After the death of Moses—In the land of Moab east of the Jordan. The thirty days of quiet and mourning following the death of Moses (Deut. 34. 8) being now
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ended, **Jehovah spake unto Joshua, the son of Nun**, of the tribe of Ephraim, who had been one of the spies. His real name was Hoshea (Num. 13. 8, 16). **Moses' minister**—That is, his assistant. Joshua is not called the servant either of Moses or of Jehovah. **2. My servant**—The most distinguished title under the theocracy, up to this point in the narrative applied only to Moses. **This Jordan**—The name means literally "the descender." The length of the Jordan valley from the head waters of the stream at the foot of Mount Hermon to its mouth is about seventy miles, though because of the zigzag course which the stream takes, its actual length is nearly two hundred miles. Its name is derived from its rapid descent by a series of plunging rapids to the Dead Sea, nine hundred feet below sea level. **3. As I spake unto Moses**—The promise referred to is given in Deut. 11. 24. **4. Lebanon**—Lit., *white mountain*, the name given to the lofty range of mountains in northern Palestine, faintly visible in the distance from the heights of Moab far to the south. **The great river, the river Euphrates**—Far to the east of where Israel now was, but by far the largest and most important river of western Asia. **Hittites**—Comp. Introduction to the lesson for March 17. **5. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee**—Words quoted by the writer to the Hebrews in the familiar exhortation of Heb. 13. 5. (Comp. also Deut. 31. 6, 8.) **7. Have good success**—Or, *deal wisely*. **10. Officers of the people**—The Hebrew word translated officer means literally *writer* or *scribe*; but it is used also to designate an officer or magistrate a minor part of whose duties only consists of writing. **11. Victuals**—Here used in the sense of provisions for a journey, as is often the case in the books of Joshua and Judges. **Within three days**—In Josh. 4. 19 we learn that the actual crossing of the Jordan took place on the tenth day of the first month. Hence this command must have been given on the seventh day of the month. The expedition of the spies recorded in the next chapter occupied the time from the fifth to the eighth of the month.

Application: Strength and Courage

I. One Lesson from the Story of Judges.—The lesson of personal courage. This is illustrated in the life of each successive great leader who sought to liberate Israel from the oppression of its enemies, and to restore the purity of the religion of Jehovah from which the people had so quickly lapsed. The courage of these men was necessarily largely a type of physical courage, but it was not this alone, but contained also elements of the nobler and higher moral courage. **II. Born of Faith.**—1. Joshua's courage was born of faith in Jehovah and his power to fulfill the promises made to his people. 2. Apart from strong faith in the cause which one advocates, courage in time of opposition and difficulty is impossible. 3. The Christian's courage and strength is likewise born of faith, the lack of which brings cowardice and failure in the Christian life. **III. Essential Elements in the Christian Life.**—1. The Christian life is

not in every sense an easy life. Its difficulties are often underestimated. It requires strength and courage of the highest type. 2. Not physical courage, but moral determination. This the weakest physically and the poorest and least conspicuous disciple may have in largest measure.

For Further Discussion

Of what tribe was Joshua a member? What was his real name? How did he compare in age with other men in Israel? What had been his past history and training for leadership? How are men trained for leadership to-day? In the state? In the church? In the field of religious education?

LESSON II.—October 13

ISRAEL ENTERS THE LAND OF PROMISE.—Josh. 3. 5-17

Read Josh. 2-4.

Memorize verse 17.

5. And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow Jehovah will do wonders among you. 6. And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. 7. And Jehovah said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. 8. And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, ye shall stand still in the Jordan. 9. And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God. 10. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite. 11. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into the Jordan. 12. Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, for every tribe a man. 13. And it shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, that the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off, even the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand in one heap. 14. And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents, to pass over the Jordan, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant being before the people; 15 and when they that bare the ark were come unto the Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brink of the water (for the Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest), 16 that the waters which came down from above stood, and

rose up in one heap, a great way off, at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan; and those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah, even the Salt Sea, were wholly cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho. **17.** And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Jehovah stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation were passed clean over the Jordan.

Golden Text.—He led them also by a straight way, that they might go to a city of habitation.—Psa. 107. 7.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—**M.** Israel Enters the Land of Promise, Josh. 3. 5-17. **T.** The memorials, Josh. 4. 1-11. **W.** The waters return, Josh. 4. 12-24. **Th.** The God of Elijah, 2 Kings 2. 1-14. **F.** The presence of the Lord, Psa. 114. **S.** Tell the children! Psa. 78. 1-8. **S.** The great Helper, Isa. 43. 1-13.

Introduction: Joshua's First Task

Entering the Promised Land from the east, Joshua's first task was to gain possession of the narrow strip of fertile land on the western shore of the Jordan. The stronghold of this region was Jericho, a walled city of no little importance among the cities of western Asia at that time. The capture of Jericho was necessary before Israel could hope to proceed farther inland to the heights beyond Jericho. Its siege and capture constitute the topic of study in our lesson for next Sunday, October 20.

Explanation: A Textual Study

5. The preceding chapter records the sending forth of the spies by Joshua and their return with encouraging news, "Truly Jehovah hath delivered into our hands all the land; and moreover all the inhabitants of the land do melt away before us" (Josh. 2. 24). **Sanctify yourselves**—Set yourselves apart from all uncleanness and from all dissipation of body and mind. **6. Pass over**—Advance. **8. The priests that bear the ark**—No other persons were allowed to come near or touch this emblem of Jehovah's presence. **10. Canaanite**—Lit., *lowlanders*, dwelling principally on the Mediterranean coast. **Hittite**—Descendants of Heth. (Comp. Introduction to lesson for March 17.) **Hivite**—A peaceful commercial people dwelling in northern Palestine. **Perizzite**—(Comp. explanation for lesson of February 17). **Girgashite**—Supposed to have been a subdivision of the Hivites, settled in that part of Palestine lying just east of the Sea of Galilee. **Amorite**—The name means literally *mountaineer*. The Amorites originally occupied the hill country west of the Dead Sea as far as Hebron; later they crossed the Jordan valley and occupied much of the territory northward to the valley of the Jabbok. **Jebusite**—A mountain tribe which occupied the strong fortress of Jebus (Jerusalem). **15. In the brink of**

the water—Far back from the usual channel of the stream. **For the Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest**—In the low semitropical valley of the Jordan the harvest had already begun, while at the same time the melting of the snow on Hermon and Lebanon caused the narrow channel of the river to be filled to overflowing, transforming the stream into a muddy, swollen, and turbid flood. **16. A great way off, at Adam**—About thirty miles north of the camp of Israel, near the ford Damieh. **The city that is beside Zarethan**—Zarethan is supposed to have been near the mouth of the Jabbok, near Succoth (1 Kings 7. 46). By some it has been identified with an isolated ancient site some seventeen miles north of Jericho, where steep cliffs confine the stream within its narrowest limits, almost, as it were, throwing a barrier across its path. **Were wholly cut off**—Flowed away entirely, leaving the channel empty.

Application: Realizing God's Presence

I. *Obstacles in the Way of Such Realization*.—1. Preoccupation of mind. This is the cause oftentimes of our losing a blessing in a church service, of failing to cultivate our spiritual nature, and of discovering the highest manifestations of God's truth and love about us. 2. Doubt. We must note the difference between positive doubts and uncertainties. The soul may be long in the twilight of uncertainty, but if there be a yearning for truth and a desire to know God this temporary and transitory state is no hindrance to God's manifestation of himself to the soul. But positive doubt involves a negative volition, a turning from God and truth, and hence responsibility. 3. Sin, the greatest barrier. Most positive doubters are such because something in their life is out of harmony with truth and light. II. *Manifestations of God's Presence among Men*.—1. The Christian sanctuary, of which the ark, the tabernacle, and the temple were symbols. No greater proof of God's existence is needed than the religious nature and cravings of men which find expression in the building of sanctuaries and altars at which men seek to draw near to God. If in error and disappointed, man would not persist in rearing these costly sanctuaries. What of intellectual error man may bring with him when he worships God does not constitute the test of his acceptability with God, who speaks to the yearning soul always in language which that soul can understand. 2. Chosen men of God whom he has honored unmistakably in the sight of their fellow men (v. 7). 3. Miracles (v. 10-13). "Hereby ye shall know." A miracle is an act of God which man sees but cannot explain by any laws of nature known to him. It is a glimpse into the workings of a higher law as yet beyond the range of human knowledge. 4. His providential dealing with nations and individuals.

For Further Discussion

Name five tribes or nations of original inhabitants of Palestine. What part of Palestine did each occupy? What can you say concerning the location and import-

ance of Jericho and of the character of its inhabitants? Define a miracle. Does the working of a miracle involve the breaking of a natural law?

LESSON III.—October 20

THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO.—Josh. 6. 8-20

Read Josh. 5-8.

Memorize verse 20

8. And it was so, that, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Jehovah passed on, and blew the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah followed them. 9. And the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and the rearward went after the ark, *the priests* blowing the trumpets as they went. 10. And Joshua commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout. 11. So he caused the ark of Jehovah to compass the city, going about it once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. 12. And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of Jehovah. 13. And the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of Jehovah went on continually, and blew the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; and the rearward came after the ark of Jehovah, *the priests* blowing the trumpets as they went. 14. And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. 15. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early at the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. 16. And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for Jehovah hath given you the city. 17. And the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Jehovah: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. 18. But as for you, only keep yourselves from the devoted thing, lest when ye have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing; so would ye make the camp of Israel accursed and trouble it. 19. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are holy unto Jehovah: they shall come into the treasury of Jehovah. 20. So the people shouted, and *the priests* blew the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

Golden Text.—By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been compassed about for seven days.—Heb. 11. 30.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joshua's vision, Josh. 5. 10–15. *T.* The Capture of Jericho, Josh. 6. 1–8. *W.* The Capture of Jericho, Josh. 6. 9–20. *Th.* Singing and victory, 2 Chron. 20. 14–24. *F.* Punishment of idolatry, Deut. 7. 1–11. *S.* Mighty through God, 2 Cor. 10. 1–6. *S.* "Wonderful things," Isa. 25.

Introduction: Intervening Events

At the command of Joshua two monuments were erected to commemorate the miraculous crossing of the Jordan. Each monument consisted of a pile of twelve large stones taken by twelve men from the empty channel of the river. The first mentioned was erected west of the Jordan at the place of the first night's encampment after crossing. The second was erected in the river bed itself in the place where the priests had stood with the ark while the people passed over. The auspicious entry of the Israelites into Canaan struck terror to the hearts of the native inhabitants; but before the hosts of Israel are permitted to march on to the conquest of Jericho a halt is made at Gilgal, southeast of Jericho, where a temporary camp is established. Here the covenant of circumcision which had been neglected during the forty years of desert sojourn is re-established. Here, too, the manna ceases to fall; and here lastly Joshua is encouraged by a night vision of the prince of the host of Jehovah. When finally the time for advancing came Jericho naturally was the first stronghold to be taken. The manner in which the city is overcome is described in our lesson passage.

Explanation: A Textual Study

8. When Joshua had spoken unto the people— In verses 1–7 preceding our lesson passage Joshua's words of instruction and exhortation to the people are recorded. **Before Jehovah**—Before the ark which represented Jehovah's presence. **9. The rearward—** That is, the *rear guard*, or detachment of warriors following the ark and protecting the rear. **11. Going about it once**—On the first day. **Into the camp**—At Gilgal. "This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of that place was called Gilgal," or *rolling* (Josh. 5. 9). **12–14. Rose early in the morning**—On each day the program of the first day was repeated, **so they did six days**. **15. On the seventh day** the program was changed, for **on that day they compassed the city seven times**—The circumference of the place was probably somewhere between three and five miles, making a total march for the seventh day of between twenty-five and thirty-five miles. **17. Devoted**—Or, *utterly destroyed*. **Rahab the harlot**—The story of her kindness to the spies and of her conversion to the faith of Israel are related in chapter 2. Her name occurs in the genealogy of Jesus (Matt. 1. 5), where she is mentioned as the wife of Salmon, the son of Nashon, and as the mother of Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse. (Comp. Ruth 4. 20, 21; 1 Chron. 2. 11, Oct. 20]

51, 54.) Her faith is spoken of with approbation in Heb. 11. 31 and James 2. 25. 18. **Keep yourselves from the devoted thing**—Do not covet any of the possessions of the accursed city. **So would ye make the camp of Israel accursed**—Fit for utter destruction as was the city of Jericho. Ancient Jericho was especially notorious for the licentiousness of its inhabitants, as had been Sodom and Gomorrah, cities which cannot have been far removed from Jericho. Evidence of the low moral state of the inhabitants of Jericho is furnished by the fact that a woman of Rahab's character could at the same time be engaged in the manufacture of linen and the sale of cloth, and by the further fact that her life apparently did not banish her from the society and fellowship of parents and relatives, nor from civil, not to say respectful, recognition by the king. A sad comment on the state of ancient Jericho is the condition of the present village of Riha, which marks its ancient site, and the inhabitants of which to-day bear the same reputation for looseness of morals, in marked contrast with the high moral standards of the surrounding Bedouins. 19. **Silver, and gold . . . brass and iron**—Substances which could not be consumed by fire, being rather purified thereby. 20. **Fell down flat**—Or, *in its place*. **They took the city**—In precisely the manner in which its capture had been planned. The following chapter relates the sad trespass committed by Achan, who contrary to the explicit command of Joshua appropriated to himself part of the spoils of the city, thus bringing upon the whole camp of Israel the displeasure and chastisement of Jehovah.

Application: Every Man Straight Before Him

I. *Every Man*.—1. In unity there is strength. All failures of reform movements and advance movements on the part of the Christian church are such primarily because of the lack of unity among the reform or Christian forces. Doubtless the failure on the part of any portion of the Israelitish army to obey implicitly the instructions of their leader would have entailed the loss of the city. 2. The saddest sight incidental to all attacks on the strongholds of sin and systems of iniquity in our time is the depleted ranks of the attacking forces. Where, in such cases, are the others who believe in the justice of the cause? 3. The failure of good men to unite with their fellows in aggressive reform work often throws the control of a reform movement into weak and unworthy hands.

II. *The Most Favorable Point of Attack*.—1. When the forces of righteousness are a unit in an effort to destroy the strongholds of sin it is an unnecessary waste of time to seek long for favorable points of attack. Under such conditions every individual need but to face the enemy just where he is and advance. 2. Sometimes caution and the wisdom of serpents is necessary, but in a majority of cases the best method of attack is the "straightforward" method. 3. This means: In politics—my ward, my neighborhood, my city, my state; in church—my class, my family; in business—my associates and employees.

For Further Discussion

What events intervene between those of our last lesson and this one? What memorials were erected? How many? Where each one? Was the delay in the camp at Gilgal and the daily march around the walls at Jericho in any way a test of the faith of the Israelites?

LESSON IV.—October 27

CALEB'S FAITHFULNESS REWARDED.—Josh.
14. 6-15

Read Josh. 14.

Memorize verses 7, 8.

6. Then the children of Judah drew nigh unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah spake unto Moses the man of God concerning me and concerning thee in Kadesh-barnea. 7. Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of Jehovah sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land; and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. 8. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed Jehovah my God. 9. And Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy foot hath trodden shall be an inheritance to thee and to thy children for ever, because thou hast wholly followed Jehovah my God. 10. And now, behold, Jehovah hath kept me alive, as he spake, these forty and five years, from the time that Jehovah spake this word unto Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. 11. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, and to go out and to come in. 12. Now therefore give me this hill-country, whereof Jehovah spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and cities great and fortified: it may be that Jehovah will be with me, and I shall drive them out, as Jehovah spake. 13. And Joshua blessed him; and he gave Hebron unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14. Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite unto this day; because that he wholly followed Jehovah, the God of Israel. 15. Now the name of Hebron beforetime was Kiriath-arba; which Arba was the greatest man among the Anakim. And the land had rest from war.

Golden Text.—Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things.—Matt. 25. 23.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M. Caleb's Faithfulness Rewarded*, Josh. 14. 6-15. *T. Caleb's faith*, Num. 13. 21-30. *W. Trust and courage*, 2 Chron. 32. 1-8. *Th. Confidence*. Oct. 27]

dence in God, Rom. 8. 24-31. *F.* The upright man, Psa. 18. 25-35. *S.* Reward of integrity, Luke 19. 12-26. *S.* Faithful and unfaithful, Matt. 25. 14-30.

Introduction: The Conquest Begun

From Jericho Joshua led the hosts of Israel inland, that is, westward from the Jordan, up a narrow valley of a small tributary stream which enters the Jordan from the northwest near Jericho. His first objective point was the city of Luz (Beth-el). Hardly, however, had the advance been decided upon when the progress of the people was delayed by the defeat of a portion of the army sent to take the city of Ai, their defeat being occasioned by the displeasure of Jehovah with Israel because of the sin of Achan. This man of the tribe of Judah had appropriated unto himself part of the plunder of the city of Jericho, contrary to the direct command of Jehovah to utterly destroy all that the city contained. Not until the transgressor himself and all those associated with him had been punished by death was the expedition against Ai successful. The chapters intervening between our last lesson and this one record the further exploits of Joshua, and in chapter 12 we have a summary of the kings and peoples whom the Israelites under Joshua conquered. With chapter 14 begins the account of the division of the land among the different tribes, beginning with Judah.

Explanation: A Textual Study

- 6. Children of Judah**—Representatives of the tribe of Judah. **Caleb the son of Jephunneh**—First mentioned in the list of princes who acted as spies in the second year of the Exodus (Num. 13. 6). Besides Joshua, the only man who on his return from searching out the Promised Land encouraged the Israelites to go up and possess it. **The Kenizzite**—That is, the son of Kenas, head of one of the families of Judah. **Kadesh-barnea**—The location of the camp of Israel during most of the thirty-eight years of the desert pilgrimage. **8. Made the heart of the people melt**—Made them lose courage. **Wholly followed Jehovah**—Both obeying his commands implicitly and trusting him fully. **9. Moses sware on that day**—The promise of Moses is recorded in Deut. 1. 36: “Caleb the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed Jehovah.” **10. As he spake**—Through Moses in the verse just quoted. **These forty and five years**—Apparently, therefore, between five and seven years had elapsed since Israel first crossed the Jordan. **12. This hill country**—To the south of Jerusalem at Hebron. **Anakim**—A race of giants. Comp. note in lesson of September 1. **It may be that**—Perhaps. A phrase not expressing doubt, but rather modest hope and confidence. **14. Unto this day**—Unto the time of the writing of this record by the original author of the book. **15. The name of Hebron**—Hebron was apparently the original name of the city which after Abraham's stay

there received the name **Kiriath-arba**—At the time of Caleb's taking possession of the place the Israelites restored to it its ancient name. The name Kiriath-arba really signifies *city of Arba; which Arba was the greatest man*, that is, a chieftain **among the Anakim**. **The land had rest from war**—A period of peace followed the entering of the Israelites upon their inheritance.

Application: Caleb's Character

I. *Straight-forward*.—All that we know about Caleb points to the uprightness and honesty of his character. His was both a frank and an aggressive nature. II. *Steadfast*.—Through long years it was necessary for Caleb to await the time of the fulfillment of a promise made to him at Kadesh-barnea, but during the forty and five years of waiting it would appear that he never once wavered in his faith in Jehovah and Jehovah's willingness and ability to fulfill his promise; and at the age of eighty-five we discover in him the same character traits of uprightness and valor that he manifested in his earlier manhood. III. *Strong*.—Such straightforward steadfastness indicates strength. Caleb was no weakling. He was strong in body, strong in mind, and strong in heart.

For Further Discussion

What is told us in the Bible narrative concerning Caleb's life? What may we, as Christians learn from his life and character? Does it pay to wait patiently for the fulfillment of God's promises? Does a life the greater part of which is lived in expectation and anticipation rather than in the realization of a great boon seem in any sense wasted or a disappointment? Wherein lies the secret of a happy life?

LESSON V.—November 3

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.—Josh. 20. 1-9.

Read Num. 35. 6-34.

Memorize verses 2, 3.

1. And Jehovah spake unto Joshua, saying, 2. Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Assign you the cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by Moses; 3 that the manslayer that killeth any person unwittingly and unawares may flee thither: and they shall be unto you for a refuge from the avenger of blood. 4. And he shall flee unto one of those cities, and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city, and declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city; and they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. 5. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver up the manslayer into his hand; because he smote his neighbor unawares, and hated him not beforetime. 6. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before

the congregation for judgment, until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the manslayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. 7. And they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill-country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (the same is Hebron) in the hill-country of Judah. 8. And beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness in the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. 9. These were the appointed cities for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person unwittingly might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

Golden Text.—My refuge is in God.—Psa. 62. 7.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Cities of Refuge, Josh. 20. 1–9. *T.* The previous command, Deut. 19. 1–10. *W.* Cities of the Levites, Num. 35. 1–15. *Th.* Refuge in God, Psa. 18. 1–19. *F.* Sure and steadfast, Heb. 6. 11–20. *S.* My refuge, Psa. 91. *S.* The only refuge, Psa. 62.

Introduction ; Blood Revenge

The criminal law of the ancient Hebrews, like that of other ancient peoples, laid upon the person next of kin to the one who had been murdered or slain accidentally the duty of avenging his relative's death. This custom of blood revenge, as it is called, still exists in many parts of the world. It is characteristic especially of peoples in a certain stage of social development, and rests ultimately on two fundamental principles, namely, the sacredness of human life and the sense of solidarity of family clan or tribe to primitive society. "When, with the advance of civilization and the gradual evolution of the state, the duty of safeguarding the rights of the community passes to the state, blood revenge becomes obsolete." (Kennedy.) Among the Hebrews the custom was in vogue from prehistoric times down to the time of David, and possibly even longer. The institution of cities of refuge in Israel was the first step toward the ultimate abolishment of this custom among the Hebrews.

Explanation : A Textual Study

2. Cities of refuge—Later Jewish literature describes in detail the provisions by which these cities were made easily accessible, the law requiring that the roads leading to them be kept in thorough repair and free from all obstructions. At every turning point in the road signposts bearing the word "Refuge," were erected to guide the unhappy manslayer in his flight. **3. Unwittingly**—Or, *through error*. **Unawares**—The protection of the cities of refuge was only for the man who had accidentally slain another. To the murderer in heart and

fact these cities offered no protection. **The avenger of blood**—Heb. *goel*, meaning literally *the claimant*. In actual practice the nearest of kin to the slain or injured party became the *goel*. Among the civil duties of this person were the redemption of property of a deceased relative, the redemption of such relative from servitude, the payment and receipt of conscience money in place of such relative when the latter had died without the settlement of such claim. **4. At the entrance of the gate of the city**—Actually in the open space inside the gate, the place of public administration of justice, where the accused man might present his cause before **the elders of that city**. **Give him a place**—In later times the law provided also that he be taught a trade in order that he might become a self-supporting citizen. **6. Until the death of the high priest**—The high priest was the head of the theocracy and representative of the whole people. In consequence of this his office and person were regarded of such importance that when he died the death of every other person was, so to speak, forgotten in consequence, and a general pardon was granted to all guilty of accidental manslaughter. **Then shall the manslayer return**—Years might, however, elapse and the man himself die before such time and opportunity came. **7. Set apart**—Or, *sanctified*, the same Hebrew word being so translated in many places. The translation of the verb here given in the text illustrates the literal meaning of the word “sanctified.” **Galilee**—Not so called, however, until in later times. The use of the word here indicates that the writer of the narrative lived at a later time, when the word was already in use. **Shechem**—The central city west of the Jordan. For the location of the different cities, compare map accompanying the lessons of this Quarter. **9. For the stranger that sojourneth among them**—The privileges and protection of the Mosaic law extended not only to members of the elect nation, but to strangers who dwelt among them as well. We are to think of such strangers as naturalized foreigners. The Jews have never been the absolutely exclusive people we sometimes regard them as being.

Application: “Vengeance Is Mine”

I. Harmful Effects of System of Blood Revenge.—1. It made retribution a matter of personal feeling, even in cases where the punishment inflicted was deserved. 2. It stimulated the fiercest passions and tempers of men. 3. It inculcated perpetual hatreds, family, clan, and tribal feuds. 4. It caused the unnecessary shedding of blood. 5. It really lessened the regard for sacredness of human life which it was originally intended to deepen. **II. Influence of Old and New Testament Teaching.**—1. In the Old Testament provision for cities of refuge and for the trial of the manslayer we have the first step toward the transfer of authority in dealing with crime from the hands of individuals to the hands of magistrates. 2. The rich fruitage of Old and New Testament teaching on this point is seen in modern systems of dealing with crime, and especially with murder.

which gives the accused the benefit of every doubt and the advantage of every technicality. Doubtless these modern systems are still imperfect, and in actual practice often corrupt, but, in so far as they are at all superior to the old system of blood revenge, that superiority is due to the influence of Bible teaching on the nations of the world. III. *The Better New Testament Way.*—1. "Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. 5. 39). 2. "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you" (Matt. 5. 44). 3. Personal feeling is to be overcome and retribution left to a higher authority. Slowly God is teaching the human race the lesson, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

For Further Discussion

In what respects was the system of criminal law in Israel superior to that of other ancient peoples? To what extent are our modern methods of dealing with criminals in harmony with the spirit and teaching of the New Testament? Point out some deficiencies in our present-day systems. Is the inflicting of the death penalty right? Is it desirable? The pro and con of our prison system? The pro and con of imprisonment for life?

LESSON VI.—November 10

JOSHUA RENEWING THE COVENANT WITH ISRAEL.—Josh. 24. 14-28

Read Josh. 23 and 24.

Memorize verses 22-24.

14. Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. 15. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your father served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah. 16. And the people answered and said, Far be it from us that we should forsake Jehovah, to serve other gods; 17 for Jehovah our God, he it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the peoples through the midst of whom we passed; 18 and Jehovah drove out from before us all the peoples, even the Amorites that dwelt in the land: therefore we also will serve Jehovah; for he is our God. 19. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve Jehovah; for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgression nor your sins. 20. If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you evil, and consume you, after that he hath done you good. 21. And the people

said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve Jehovah. 22. And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Jehovah, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses. 23. Now therefore put away, *said he*, the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto Jehovah, the God of Israel. 24. And the people said unto Joshua, Jehovah our God will we serve, and unto his voice will we hearken. 25. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. 26. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God; and he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah. 27. And Joshua said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us; for it hath heard all the words of Jehovah which he spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness against you, lest ye deny your God. 28. So Joshua sent the people away, every man unto his inheritance.

Golden Text.—Choose you this day whom ye will serve.—Josh. 24. 15.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* The Assembly, Josh. 24. 1–13. *T.* Joshua Renewing the Covenant with Israel, Josh. 24. 14–25. *W.* Joshua Renewing the Covenant with Israel, Josh. 24. 26–33. *Th.* Samuel's exhortation, 1 Sam. 12. 1–15. *F.* Choose life! Deut. 30. 11–20. *S.* Reasonable service, Rom. 12. 1–8. *S.* The first choice, Matt. 6. 24–34.

Introduction: The Intervening Narrative

The three cities on either side of Jordan, set apart as cities of refuge, were at the same time residence cities for Levites and priests. Of such there were forty-eight all told. These, with the pasture lands surrounding them, were set apart by law for this purpose (20. 1 to 21. 42). The conquest of the land west of Jordan being now practically an accomplished fact (21. 43–45), Joshua permitted the two and one half tribes to return to their homes east of Jordan, at the same time exhorting them earnestly to be faithful to Jehovah (22. 1–8). The erection of a memorial by these eastern tribes intended to witness their kinship with Israel being misunderstood by the other tribes, incurs the severe displeasure of the latter and almost results in civil war (22. 9–34). The book of Joshua concludes with two farewell addresses of the great leader, the first (23) couched in general terms, the second (24. 1–23) in somewhat more specific language. Part of this second address constitutes the text for our present lesson.

Explanation: A Textual Study

14. Now therefore—Because of Jehovah's mercy and goodness, pointed out in the words of Joshua recorded in preceding verses, in which he gives a summary of historical events from the past history of Israel. **Fear Jehovah**—As one fears a father whom he loves. **And Nov. 10]**

put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt—A passage pointing to idolatry (1) as common among the early ancestors of the Hebrew race, and (2) as still secretly practiced among the people at this time. The river referred to is probably the Euphrates.

15. Choose you this day whom ye will serve—Compare the words of Elijah on Mount Carmel: “How long go ye limping between the two sides? if Jehovah be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him” (1 Kings 18. 21).

But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah—The courageous word of a courageous man. In this connection compare Jehovah’s word concerning Abraham: “For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice” (Gen. 18. 19).

16. The people answered—Verses 16–24 give the answer of the people to Joshua’s summons to choose definitely between the service of Jehovah and idolatry.

17. Jehovah our God, he it is—The promises of the people to be faithful in the future are made by them in view of God’s dealings with them in the past, especially (1) their deliverance from Egypt; (2) the great signs wrought by Jehovah in Egypt; (3) his preservation of the nation in the wilderness; (4) his aid in overcoming their enemies en-route to the Land of Promise.

19. Ye cannot serve Jehovah—Joshua reminds the people of the difficulty involved in anyone’s serving Jehovah aright, and bids them bear in mind especially that **he is a holy God and a jealous God**. Compare the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, “No man can serve two masters” (Matt. 6. 24).

21. Nay; but we will serve Jehovah—A solemn vow voluntarily made.

22. We are witnesses—Each was a witness to the vow of his neighbor, and the vow of each was witnessed by all the rest.

23. The foreign gods which are among you—The secret practice of idolatry at this time was doubtless caused by Israel’s proximity to, and intercourse with, surrounding idolatrous nations.

25. Made a covenant—Verses 25–28 record the solemn renewing of the covenant. Israel had made a covenant with Jehovah at Sinai (Exod. 19. 20), solemnly ratifying the same with burnt offerings and peace offerings, with the reading of the law before the people, and with the sprinkling of blood. This covenant Moses had renewed on the plains of Moab (Deut. 29. 1). The solemn ceremony on both occasions had been witnessed by Joshua, who doubtless gave to this occasion of reestablishing the covenant at Shechem somewhat of the same solemnity.

A statute—A law.

26. Under the oak—An historic old tree and **sanctuary** mentioned in Gen. 12. 6; 35. 4.

28. Every man unto his inheritance—The people thus became widely scattered, the farthest extremes being several miles apart. Verse 31 of this chapter records the fact that the people were for a generation at least faithful to the promise made at this renewal of the covenant. In their vacillation between right and wrong, between obedience and disobedience to God, the people of Israel are typical of the human race in all ages.

Application: Concerning Witnesses

I. *Witnesses against Ourselves.*—1. The testimony of conscience against our evil life. 2. Every criticism of the faults of another person is a testimony to the fact that we are to blame if we do not ourselves live up to the standards that we set for others. 3. Obedience expected of children by their parents, gratitude expected from those whom we have aided, honor demanded by those to whom honor is due, all witness to the justice of God's demand for our obedient and loving service. 4. Our very profession of religion to-day will be an abiding witness against us if we forsake God. II. *Witnessing for Christ.*—1. Such witnessing presupposes a surrender of one's life to Christ, faith, devotion, love, and joy in his service. 2. By word of mouth. Oral testimony is important, but secondary to the testimony of our life example. It is important because we sometimes have an opportunity to testify by word of mouth before some who are not near enough to us to benefit by the testimony of our actions. It is important also because verbal testimony itself is part of our life example. By such we may encourage others to witness publicly for Christ. 3. By life example. This sort of testimony is the most important factor in the spread of Christ's kingdom on earth. Without the testimony of a consistent life verbal testimony of devotion to Christ has little weight. "Your actions speak so loud that I cannot hear what you say."

For Further Discussion

What lesson or suggestion has this passage for us in our plans and preparations for Decision Day? The element of personal leadership in bringing men to a decision for Christ. Working with individuals versus working with multitudes.

LESSON VII.—November 17

GIDEON AND HIS THREE HUNDRED.—Judg. 7.
9–23

Read Judg. 6–8.

Memorize verses 17, 18.

9. And it came to pass the same night, that Jehovah said unto him, Arise, get thee down into the camp; for I have delivered it into thy hand. 10. But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Purah thy servant down to the camp: 11 and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thy hands be strengthened to go down into the camp. Then went he down with Purah his servant unto the outermost part of the armed men that were in the camp. 12. And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like locusts for multitude; and their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the sea-shore for multitude. 13. And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man telling a dream unto his fellow;

and he said Behold, I dreamed a dream; and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian, and came unto the tent, and smote it so that it fell, and turned it upside down, so that the tent lay flat. **14.** And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: into his hand God hath delivered Midian, and all the host. **15.** And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshiped; and he returned into the camp of Israel, and said, Arise; for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. **16.** And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers. **17.** And he said unto them, Look on me, and do likewise: and, behold, when I come to the outermost part of the camp, it shall be that, as I do, so shall ye do. **18.** When I blow the trumpet, I and all that are with me, then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp, and say, For Jehovah and for Gideon. **19.** So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. **20.** And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon. **21.** And they stood every man in his place round about the camp; and all the host ran; and they shouted, and put *them* to flight. **22.** And they blew the three hundred trumpets, and Jehovah set every man's sword against his fellow, and against all the host; and the host fled as far as Bethshittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath. **23.** And the men of Israel were gathered together out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh, and pursued after Midian.

Golden Text.—Ye shall not fear them; for Jehovah your God, he it is that fighteth for you.—Deut. 3. 22.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Sin and its consequences, Judg. 6. 1–10. *T.* Gideon's call, Judg. 6. 11–24. *W.* Gideon encouraged, Judg. 6. 25–40. *Th.* Gideon and His Three Hundred, Judg. 7. 1–14. *F.* Gideon and His Three Hundred, Judg. 7. 15–23. *S.* “Not by might,” Zech. 4. 1–10. *S.* Power in weakness, 1 Cor. 1. 20–31.

Introduction: The Book of Judges

The narrative of the book of Judges covers the period from the death of Joshua to the beginning of the struggle between Israel and the Philistines. It is most important for a correct understanding of the history and development of Israel and the religious life of the Jewish people. One important moral lesson runs through all the briefer narratives which make up the content of the book.

That lesson is this: In the history of Israel unfaithfulness to Jehovah was regularly followed by the displeasure of Jehovah and his chastisement in the form of foreign invasions, while obedience and fidelity to Jehovah was invariably rewarded by peace and prosperity. Repentance on the part of Israel after a period of disobedience and after the punishments received at the hand of Jehovah always brought deliverance from the oppression of the enemies, Jehovah in each case raising up a leader to deliver his people. The moral lesson of the book is most fully stated in 2. 6 to 3. 6, which passage forms a sort of epitome as well as a preface for the entire narrative of the book. In the list of heroes who in turn are raised up to deliver Israel from the oppression of its enemies the names of Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson are the most prominent.

Explanation: A Textual Study

9. The explicit command of Jehovah to Israel when entering the borders of the Promised Land had been to utterly destroy and drive out the idolatrous inhabitants of the land. The failure of Israel to comply with this command became a source of perpetual trouble and of permanent disadvantage and loss to the people in the centuries which followed. Our lesson story transports us at once into the very center of this time of trouble.

Into the camp—Of the Midianites. (Comp. v. 12.)

10. Servant—The Hebrew word signifies *boy*, and is also used to designate a page or attendant or an armor-bearer.

11. Afterward shall thy hands be strengthened—A Hebrew idiom meaning *thou shalt be encouraged*.

12. Midianites—A race dwelling south and southeast of Palestine in the desert just north of the Arabian peninsula. Outside of the Bible narratives we have no reliable reference to this people. (Comp. Gen. 25. 1, 2; 37. 28, 36; Exod. 2. 15; 3 1.)

Amalekites—Arabian traditions make them the descendants of Amlak, or Amlik, the son of Lud, the son of Shem, and represents that the Amalekites were driven westward from Babylonia in very early times.

Like locusts for multitude—In another place we are told that the host of Israel's enemies numbered 135,000.

13. Gideon—The story of Gideon begins Judg. 6. 11, and ends with 8. 35.

A cake of barley bread—A large, flat, round disklike loaf, hard baked.

The tent—Probably the tent of the narrator is meant; or possibly that of the chief of the host.

14. This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon—The bold act of Gideon in destroying the altar of Baal, and his warlike preparations in gathering the tribes together for defense, had doubtless become known to the enemy.

15. He worshiped—He was prompt to recognize Jehovah's hand in the turn of events.

16. Divided the three hundred men into three companies—For a simultaneous night attack upon the enemy's camp from different directions. In modern phrase, Gideon planned to stampede the enemy, and succeeded in carrying out his plan.

18. On every side of all the camp—To give the impression of a great host attacking from several directions.

19. The beginning
Nov. 17]

of the middle watch—In later Roman times the night was divided for military purposes into four watches instead of three. **22. Beth-shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel-meholah, by Tabbath**—Places of no great importance eastward toward the Jordan.

Application: Strategy in Christian Warfare

I. *Strategy Defined*.—“1. *Mil.* The science of projecting and directing important military movements or operations; especially, the skillful handling of masses or combinations of men, . . . securing points or lines most favorable for supply, attack, defense, or retreat. 2. The display or exercise of skill and forethought in carrying out one's plans, schemes, etc.”—*Standard Dictionary*. II. *Gideon's Example*.—1. Gideon's victory was a triumph of strategy, that is, of wise forethought and planning. 2. He made the best use of a small and well-chosen, trustworthy company of men. 3. He informed himself as to the exact situation, strength, and spirit of the enemy. 4. He followed up persistently every advantage. III. *In Christian Warfare*.—1. A right disposition of our energies is more important than the mere sum of them. (Comp. Luke 16. 8; Matt. 10. 16.) 2. While the Christian is not justified in practicing deliberate deception to gain his point, it is equally true that ignorance is a sign of weakness and that piety is not commensurate with dullness. 3. There is work for the diplomat and the tactician in the kingdom of God.

For Further Discussion

Is war justifiable? The place and value of physical courage in the Christian life. Is it ever right to deceive? To what extent does the end justify the means in Christian work? The sin of ignorance and lack of forethought in the Christian life.

LESSON VIII.—November 24

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY.—Rom. 14.
12-23

Memorize verses 19-21

12. So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. 14. I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15. For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16. Let not their good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom

of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18.** For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. **19.** So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. **20.** Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. **21.** It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. **22.** The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. **23.** But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Golden Text.—Judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in *his* brother's way, or an occasion of falling.—Rom. 14. 13.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* World's Temperance Lesson, Rom. 14. 12–23. *T.* Our neighbor's good, Rom. 15. 1–7. *W.* Avoiding offense, 1 Cor. 8. 1–13. *Th.* The mind of Jesus, Phil. 2. 1–11. *F.* The better life, Rom. 8. 8–17. *S.* Walking wisely, Eph. 5. 6–21. *S.* Avoiding the appearance of evil, 1 Thess. 5. 14–28.

Introduction: The Chapter in Outline

The chapter from which our lesson is taken falls naturally into three parts. Verses 1–5 contain an exhortation to those who have grasped the full meaning of the Christian faith not to condemn their fellow Christians who are still bound by detailed rules relating to food and drink and the observance of certain days. In verses 6–12 the apostle urges that every man should seek to become established in his own mind with regard to the observance or nonobservance of certain rules of daily conduct, since these things in themselves are wholly indifferent. To Christ alone, whose we all are, each should look, for to him alone each will be responsible. In verses 13–23 the exhortation against censoriousness is repeated, together with an added warning against placing obstacles in the way of fellow Christians. While nothing in itself is sinful, many things become so to him who considers them to be wrong and still indulges in them. As controlling motives in life, love and charity are the real essentials. Meats and wine are secondary things; yet none should for the sake of either food or drink undo God's work in a brother's soul. It is well to have for oneself a strong faith and definite convictions and to act in harmony with them. To hesitate and waver is to incur guilt. The same exhortation to forbearance toward those who have unusual conscientious scruples is continued through verses 1–13 of the next chapter.

Explanation: A Textual Study

12. So then—This verse forms a conclusion to the discussion of verses 1–11. The argument of these verses

has been that the sense of personal responsibility should be a sufficient reason for consistency of action in one's own life, and for charity toward others. **13. Judge ye this rather**—The apostle proceeds to emphasize the necessity of charity toward others from another point of view. It is this higher rule of Christian charity which demands a consideration for the feeling and consciences of others. **14. I know**—The apostle is careful to make his own position and liberal attitude of mind perfectly plain. It is his conviction that **nothing is unclean of itself** but that it may become so **to him who accounteth it to be unclean**. **15.** Having taken this outspoken position, he is prepared to emphasize more strongly the principle which he now lays down, namely, that of the necessity of charity and love for the brother who is weaker in faith. **16. Your good**—Consisting in the higher consciousness of Christian freedom. **Foul spoken of**—As it will be in case this liberality of mind is paraded in the presence of others where it may give offense. **17. The kingdom of God**—The essential thing which concerns us as disciples of Christ must determine our action. **Righteousness and peace and joy**—Essentials in the Christian life without any one of which that life is incomplete. **19. Things whereby we may edify one another**—Contribute to the upholding of each other's faith and Christian character. **21. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine**—Examples of extreme forms of self-deprivation. Paul himself would, doubtless, have been willing to live even as an Essene rather than do anything to offend those who looked to him for an example of Christian conduct. **22. To thyself before God**—Your faith is sufficient to see that all these things are a matter of indifference. Be content to know this for thyself, but do not boast of it to others who may not be as strong in faith as thou thyself art. **23. He that doubteth is condemned**—Both by his own conscience and by every righteous and impartial judgment, for acting contrary to what he believes to be right. **Whatsoever is not of faith is sin**—That is, *a moral shortcoming*, because contrary to the dictates of conscience, and hence contrary to one's highest ideal of life.

Application: The Essence of Sin

I. The Literal Meaning of the Word.—1. The Greek word translated "sin" means literally *to miss the mark*. 2. In the New Testament the word is used only of moral shortcomings. 3. The question for the Christian disciple to settle is the standard which shall determine action—a shortcoming from what? Is that standard the absolute standard which God has for right and wrong? Is it a standard of our own making? or is it a standard made for us by some other human authority? **II. Paul's Explanation.**—1. There can be no moral shortcoming without moral enlightenment. 2. The moral enlightenment of every individual, save the hardened sinner, is measured by the dictates of his conscience. 3. Hence, the violation of conscience is the only measure of moral shortcoming involving condemnation. **III. For Con-**

science Sake.—1. The promptings of a man's conscience is the measure of his ideal. No person can live on a higher plane than that created by the dictates of his conscience, or by his spiritual enlightenment. 2. To violate one's conscience, again, is to live on a plane lower than one's highest ideal. This is the essence of sin, a missing of the mark in one's inner moral life.

For Further Discussion

What is the literal meaning of the word temperance? Give briefly Paul's argument in favor of total abstinence. What other arguments in favor of total abstinence are found in the Bible? What does the total abstainer gain over the moderate drinker? What, if anything, does he lose? What need is there for the example of total abstinence from the use of alcoholic liquors in our time? In my own personal environment? To what extent are we responsible for the offense a weaker brother may take at our conduct?

LESSON IX.—December 1

THE DEATH OF SAMSON.—Judg. 16. 21–31

Read Judg. 13–16.

Memorize verses 28–30.

21. And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house. 22. Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. 23. And the lords of the Philistines gathered them together to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice; for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. 24. And when the people saw him, they praised their god; for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hand our enemy, and the destroyer of our country who hath slain many of us. 25. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made sport before them. And they set him between the pillars: 26 and Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house resteth, that I may lean upon them. 27. Now the house was full of men and women; and all the lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. 28. And Samson called unto Jehovah, and said, O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. 29. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house rested, and leaned upon them, the one with his right hand, and the other with his left. 30. And Samson said, Let me die

with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead that he slew at his death were more than they that he slew in his life. **31.** Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years.

Golden Text.—Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might.—Eph. 6. 10.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Samson and the Lion, Judg. 14. 1–9. *T.* Philistines slain, Judg. 15. 9–17. *W.* Samson defeated, Judg. 16. 4–20. *Th.* The death of Samson, Judg. 16. 21–31. *F.* The snare, Deut. 12. 28–32. *S.* Consent not! Prov. 1. 7–19. *S.* The Gospel Armor, Eph. 6. 10–20.

Introduction: The Story of Samson

The story of Samson is unique among the narratives of the book of Judges. Other heroes enumerated in the list of Judges were courageous leaders, who at the head of the fighting men of their tribe and nation delivered Israel out of the hand of its enemies and oppressors. But Samson leads no army into battle, does not fight in behalf of Israel—at least, not so far as we know from the biblical story of his life; but in his own personal quarrel with the Philistines exerts his prodigious strength to revenge himself upon his enemies. The trouble in which he is almost perpetually involved, again, is not occasioned by Philistine oppression, but is the result in each case of his unholy affection for a Philistine woman. There seems to be little, if any, moral point in the story, which abounds in rude humor and in accounts of practical jokes perpetrated by the hero on his enemies. The narrative, which forms the subject-matter for four whole chapters of the book (13–16), is a typical bit of Semitic folklore. It was doubtless a favorite story among the Jewish people. It gives us a glimpse of a side of the old Israelitish life and character not elsewhere represented in the Old Testament. Concerning the work of Samson as a judge in Israel, the story itself tells us nothing save the fact of his having held this office for a period of about twenty years.

Explanation: A Textual Study

21. The Philistines—The inhabitants of the lowland region of Palestine along the Mediterranean coast, who in the century or more just preceding the establishment of the monarchy in Israel and later were among the principal enemies of the Israelites. **Gaza**—One of the five principal Philistine cities near the coast in southwestern Palestine. The other four cities were Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron. **Grind in the prison-house**—Turning a heavy hand mill, the menial occupation of a slave or prisoner of war. **22. Howbeit the**

hair of his head began to grow—Referring to the source of his strength, he having been a Nazirite. (Comp. v. 17.) **23. The lords of the Philistines**—The rulers of the city of Gaza. **Dagon their god**—Apparently the national deity of the Philistines, though among them each city was independent and had its own subordinate deities. **Our God hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand**—Just as the Israelites would have said under like circumstances. Samson had become their enemy, however, through their own treachery toward him. **24. The destroyer of our country, who hath slain many of us**—For the story of Samson's vengeance upon the Philistines here alluded to, compare chap. 15. 4-14. **25. Call for Samson, that he may make us sport**—He was known among them as a practical jester and propounder of riddles. Possibly, however, they desired him to give an exhibition of his strength, which, though impaired, must still have been unusual. **Between the pillars**—No definite data is obtainable indicating the structure and ground plan of the Philistine temples at this time. **26. Lad**—Or, attendant. **27. Upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport**—It is quite probable that the exhibition, whatever its character, was given in the inner open court of the building, where it could be viewed from the apartments on every side and from the roof above. **28. Be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes**—Or, *be avenged of the Philistines for one of my two eyes.* If we adopt the second reading it is as though Samson had said, "The greatest evil I can inflict on them will be but a partial retribution for the loss of my sight." **30. Let me die with the Philistines**—Lit., *let my soul die.* The word translated "soul" is in the Old Testament used to indicate the breathlike something which goes out and vanishes when death comes—not, as in our usage of the word, the immortal part of man. **31. Zorah and Eshtaol**—Two localities in the valley of Sorek. The Sorek is a little stream rising north of Jerusalem and flowing southwest and west to the Mediterranean. **Judged Israel twenty years**—Its hero and recognized chief.

Application: Lessons from Samson's Life

1. Great strength, especially great physical strength, is often associated with moral cowardice.
2. To misuse and prostitute endowments of mind and body by which we might be specially useful in God's service is a grievous sin.
3. Fleshly lusts war against the Spirit, ultimately causing the Lord to depart from a man and to leave him in the power of the adversary.
4. Sin and Satan are cruel tyrants; they blind, enslave, and degrade those who become their victims.
5. The fall of a good man brings reproach upon the church and the Christian religion.
6. Though a man fall it is possible to rise again; strength lost by sin may be renewed by prayer and faith.

For Further Discussion

What Samson might have been. The New Testament teaching with regard to vengeance. (Comp. especially the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5-7.) In Prov. 6, 7, and 8, will be found a good commentary on the story and life of Samson.

LESSON X.—December 8

RUTH'S WISE CHOICE.—Ruth 1. 14-22

Read Ruth 1-4.

Memorize verses 16, 17.

14. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. 15. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. 16. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; 17. where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. 18. And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her. 19. So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi? 20. And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22. So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Golden Text.—Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.—Ruth 1. 16.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* A sad parting, Ruth 1. 1-10. *T.* Ruth's Wise Choice, Ruth 1. 14-22. *W.* Ruth and Boaz, Ruth 2. 1-12. *Th.* Kindness of Boaz, Ruth 2. 13-23. *F.* Boaz marries Ruth, Ruth. 4. 1-12. *S.* The love of Christ, Eph. 3. 14-21. *S.* Inseparable love, Rom. 8. 31-39.

Introduction: A Gem of Ancient Literature

It has always been admitted that in the story of Ruth we possess one of the loveliest little idyls that ancient historic tradition has transmitted to us. The date and authorship of the book of Ruth are unknown, though it has been with much plausibility argued that

the book, which can be construed into an argument in favor of permitting the intermarriage of Israelites with foreigners, was written in the time of Ezra as a protest against his strenuous and often inconsiderate reform measures. The more immediate and apparent purpose of the narrative seems to be to record the fact of the Moabitish ancestry of King David. But, as McFadyen has pointed out, "Whatever its didactic purpose, it is, at any rate, a wonderful prose poem, sweet, artless, and persuasive, touched with the quaintness of an older world, and fresh with the scent of the harvest field. The love—stronger than country—of Ruth and Naomi, the gracious figure of Boaz as he moved about the fields with a word of blessing for the reapers, the innocent scheming of Naomi to secure him as a husband for Ruth—these, and a score of similar touches, establish the book forever in the heart of all who love nobility and romance."

Explanation: A Textual Study

14. An Israelite from Beth-lehem, with Naomi, his wife, and two sons, is driven by stress of famine into the land of Moab, where both sons marry women of the land. In course of time the father and both sons die, and Naomi resolves to return to her native land. Ruth and Orpah, her two daughters-in-law, accompany her on her journey toward Judah and Beth-lehem. On the way Naomi urges her daughters-in-law to return to their friends and relatives in Moab. One of them, **Orpah**, decides to return and bids **her mother-in-law** and Ruth farewell. **But Ruth clave unto her**—That is, unto Naomi, her mother-in-law. **15. Her people**—Moabites. **Her gods**—Implying that if Ruth insists on accompanying her into the territory of Israel she will have to become a worshiper of Jehovah. **17. Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried**—It seems to have been customary among many peoples at this time to bury members of the same family in one and the same tomb. **Jehovah do so to me**—Her avowal to become a worshiper of Jehovah is carried into immediate execution, and she calls, not upon the gods of the Moabites, but upon Jehovah, the God of Israel, to witness her vow. **19. Beth-lehem**—Beth-lehem of Judea, where later David and, still later, Jesus was born. **20. Naomi**—The word means literally *pleasant*. **Mara**—That is, *bitter*. **21. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty**—Referring to the death of her husband and her two sons in a foreign land. **22. In the beginning of barley harvest**—In early summer, probably in June.

Application: Ruth's Choice and Mine

I. Ruth's Choice.—1. Was influenced by another's example. It was doubtless Naomi's character and life example which inclined the heart of her daughter-in-law toward Jehovah, the God of Naomi and of Israel. 2. Was far-reaching. It involved the parting with long-cherished national and religious prejudices and the accepting of new forms of worship and Israel's God, as

well as the separation of herself from old associations, environments, and friends. 3. Was prompt and final. Ruth did not hesitate or waver in her purpose; she did not regret or reconsider. Having chosen to cast her lot with the people of Jehovah and to worship him, she calls him to witness her decision: "Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." 4. Brought peace and joy and an enlargement of life and life's opportunities. II. *My Life Choice.*—1. Will also be determined by the character of those whose companionship I keep. We often fail to realize the tremendous power which friendships and comradeships exert at crucial periods in life. To cultivate the friendship of persons whom we can trust and follow at the critical turning points in life should be our aim. 2. Is a choice between Jehovah and idols; between God and mammon; between Christ and the world; between life and death. 3. May involve a parting with old friends and a radical change in manner of life. 4. Should be promptly made and should be final. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

For Further Discussion

The relation between verbal testimony and personal example and the relative value of each. Can we shirk the responsibility of the silent influence of our life example on others? Life considered as a series of successive choices. Postponing important decisions.

LESSON XI.—December 15

THE BOY SAMUEL.—1 Sam. 3. 1-21

Read 1 Sam. 1-4.

Memorize verses 8-10.

1. And the child Samuel ministered unto Jehovah before Eli. And the word of Jehovah was precious in those days; there was no frequent vision. 2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place (now his eyes had begun to wax dim, so that he could not see), 3 and the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*, in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God was; 4 that Jehovah called Samuel: and he said, Here am I. 5. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6. And Jehovah called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7. Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither was the word of Jehovah yet revealed unto him. 8. And Jehovah called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And Eli perceived that Jehovah had called the child. 9,

Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. **10.** And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said Speak; for thy servant heareth. **11.** And Jehovah said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. **12.** In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from the beginning even unto the end. **13.** For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons did bring a curse upon themselves, and he restrained them not. **14.** And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifice nor offering for ever. **15.** And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of Jehovah. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision. **16.** Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he said, Here am I. **17.** And he said, What is the thing that Jehovah hath spoken unto thee? I pray thee, hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide anything from me of all the things that he spake unto thee. **18.** And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is Jehovah: let him do what seemeth him good. **19.** And Samuel grew, and Jehovah was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. **20.** And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of Jehovah. **21.** And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh; for Jehovah revealed to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of Jehovah.

Golden Text.—Speak, Jehovah; for thy servant heareth.—1 Sam. 3. 9.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Lent to the Lord, 1. Sam. 1. 21–28. *T.* Hannah's song, 1 Sam. 2. 1–11. *W.* A child minister, 1 Sam. 2. 12–19. *Th.* The Boy Samuel, 1 Sam. 3. 1–10. *F.* The Boy Samuel, 1 Sam. 3. 11–21. *S.* Children's praise, Matt. 21. 1–16. *S.* Jesus calls a child, Matt. 18. 1–14.

Introduction: The Books of Samuel

The two books of Samuel were originally one. They cover a period of about one hundred years, from shortly after the time of Samson to the time of the establishment of the monarchy under David, a most important century in Hebrew history. The important characters in the narrative of the two books are Samuel, Saul, and David. The history of these three men is contemporaneous for several years, and the sections devoted to each, therefore, overlap. The title of the books is taken from the hero of the earlier chapters of the first book; but, since Samuel ceases to be a prominent character after the middle of this book, it would seem that some other title might have been more appropriate. The Greek

and Latin versions, indeed, adopted the more appropriate title, "First and Second Books of the Kingdoms." First and Second Kings of our Bible in the Greek and Latin versions, then, naturally became the third and fourth books of the same series. The greater part of the narrative of First and Second Samuel is devoted to the life of David.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. The child Samuel—The story of Samuel's birth and dedication to Jehovah is told in the preceding chapters. Doubtless he had now reached the age of twelve or more years. **Ministered unto Jehovah before Eli**—His work was that of a servant in the tabernacle which at this time stood at Shiloh, in the hill country of Ephraim, some twenty miles north of Jerusalem. Eli was the high priest in charge of the tabernacle. **The word of Jehovah**—The word of prophecy and of revelation from Jehovah. **Precious**—Rare. **No frequent vision**—Because of the apostasy of both priests and people Jehovah withheld his revelations from Israel. **2. Could not see**—That is, not clearly, because of his old age. **3. The lamp of God**—The lamp in the sanctuary, which according to Exod. 27. 20, 21 was "without the veil which is before the testimony" (that is, the Holy of Holies), and which was kept burning continually **where the ark of God was**. It is not necessary to think of Samuel as actually sleeping in the room in which the ark stood, which is not probable. **7. Samuel did not yet know Jehovah**—From personal intimate knowledge, as one who reveals himself to men. That Samuel did know Jehovah as the God of Israel, who was to be reverenced and feared, even better than did the sons of Eli is certain. **9. If he call thee**—The Hebrew may also be rendered, *if one call thee*. **10. Jehovah came, and stood, and called**—Evidently it was not merely in a dream that Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel, since the narrative plainly represents the communication as given by a voice which was physically audible. **11. Behold, I will do a thing in Israel**—What it is Jehovah intends to do is explained in the verses following. The apostate sons of the aged priest are to be punished for their iniquity. **15. Opened the doors of the house of Jehovah**—Part of the routine duty which fell to the lot of Samuel as a servant in the tabernacle. **Feared**—It was natural that the lad or young man should hesitate to reveal the awful announcement of impending doom to his aged superior in office. **Show**—Tell, disclose. **17. God do so to thee, and more also**—A formal imprecation sometimes connected with the slaying of an animal at the taking of an oath, its significance being that the party making the vow prays that the fate of the victim may be his in case he fails to keep his word. **19. Did let none of his words fall to the ground**—Confirmed all that he said, thus indorsing his prophetic office in the sight of all the people. **21. And Jehovah appeared again in Shiloh**—During many years preceding the wickedness of

the officiating sons of Eli, the priests, had made a revelation of Jehovah to his people at the sanctuary impossible. But now **Jehovah revealed himself to Samuel** as formerly he had done to Moses and Joshua.

Application: Light Withheld

I. *When God Withholds Light.*—1. When men and nations fail to live by and up to the light they possess. “The word of Jehovah was precious (rare) in those days” (v. 1). To neglect the light which God gives us is to ultimately lose that which we neglect. 2. When those who officiate in the sanctuary and to whom is intrusted the guidance of the people in spiritual matters are in daily life inconsistent and out of harmony with their high calling and profession (v. 13). 3. When men do not want the light which God offers. Where there is not spiritual receptivity there can be no divine revelation. II. *When and to Whom God Gives Light.*—1. To every individual that seeks and makes use of same. 2. In the ordinary routine of daily service if that service is rendered in simplicity and sincerity of heart. 3. To the remnant of faithful believers in every corrupt age and generation. III. *No Permanent Bar to the Development of truth.*—The corruption of an age or generation, be it ever so great and deplorable, and the consequent withholding of divine light from men, cannot permanently stand in the way of the onward march of truth in the world. “God’s purposes are an eternal force pressing onward into the future.”

For Further Discussion

What difficulty did Samuel experience in recognizing the call of God? What difficulties do men to-day experience in recognizing God’s call? Who assisted Samuel in this difficulty, and in what way? Are there any signs of God’s withholding the light of his truth from our own generation? By what means may the individual and the Christian church secure more of that simplicity of heart and teachableness of spirit and purity of life which alone makes possible a fuller revelation of God’s truth to men?

CHRISTMAS LESSON.—Matt. 2. 1-12

Read Matt. 2.

Memorize verses 10 to 12.

1. Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, 2. Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him. 3. And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them

where the Christ should be born. 5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written through the prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah,

Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah:

For out of thee shall come forth a governor,

Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

7. Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. 8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him. 9. And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. 11. And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. 12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Golden Text.—For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.
—Luke 2. 11.

Time.—B. C. 5-4.

Place.—Bethlehem in Judea.

Home Readings.—(selected by the International Bible Reading Association). *M.* Christmas Lesson, Matt. 2, 1-12. *T.* Herod's cruelty, Matt. 2, 13-23. *W.* The angel song, Luke 2, 8-20. *Th.* In the temple, Luke 2, 25-40. *F.* Prophecy of Christ, Isa. 9, 1-7. *S.* Worship by angels, Heb. 1, 1-8. *S.* To be a Saviour, 1 John 4, 7-14.

Introduction: When Jesus was born

Our present system of chronology, according to which we number years forward and backward from the birth of Christ (A. D., *Anno Domini*, *year of our Lord*, and B. C., *before Christ*), dates back only to the middle of the sixth century, about which time a Roman abbot, Dionysius Exiguus, is reputed to have been instrumental in inaugurating the system. But in fixing the date of the birth of Jesus which was to be the starting point of the new order of calculation an error was made by Exiguus and his co-laborers, the date of the Nativity being placed several years later than it should have been. From the gospel narrative we know that Jesus was born shortly before the death of Herod the Great. But Herod died in the year of Rome 750-751, which corresponds to the year which we now designate as B. C. 4 to B. C. 3. Hence Jesus was born *at least as early as* B. C. 4. But allowing for some months to elapse between the birth of Jesus and the slaughter of the babes at Bethlehem by

Herod, and again between this event and the death of the king, during which time Joseph with Mary and the young child sojourned in Egypt (comp. Matt. 2. 1, 16, 19), the more probable date becomes B. C. 5 to B. C. 4.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Herod the king—Son of Antipater, governor of Idumæa (Edom), the territory south of the Dead Sea where dwelt the descendants of Esau. He was the founder of the Herodian family and dynasty and was known later as Herod the Great. A cruel, unscrupulous and ambitious tyrant, his life was surrounded by plots, suspicions and intrigues which fact doubtless accounts for the increased fear, misery and cruelty of his old age. **Wise men**—Gr. *magi*, a title given to learned men, priests and physicians among the Persians and Babylonians. They were versed in astrology, sooth-saying and the interpretation of dreams. That the wise men were three kings is mere tradition resting on very meager foundation. **2. His Star**—The explicit statement of verse 9 that the star “went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was” compels us to think of the event as a supernatural phenomenon, any other explanation being inadequate. **3. All Jerusalem**—Especially those whose position, like that of the king, might be endangered by the coming of the long expected Messiah. **4. Chief Priests and Scribes**—The priesthood of Israel constituted a whole tribe (Levi) and was divided into twenty-four different “courses,” serving alternately in the temple service. The head priest of these different divisions or groups, together with the chief priest proper, is included in the expression, “chief priests.” The scribes were a separate class (Hebrew, *Sopherim*), and had been since the days of Ezra. They were both copyists of the sacred law and teachers of religion. **5. The Prophet**—For the prophecy here referred to see Mic. 5. 2. **6. Be Shepherd**—The Greek verb signifies the whole office of a shepherd—guiding, guarding, folding, as well as feeding. **8. Sent them to Bethlehem**—In accordance with the information gained from the priest and scribes. **9. The Star . . . went before them**—They were not permitted to remain dependent upon the directions received from the treacherous king, who was already plotting the death of the newborn babe. **11. The House**—Not necessarily the same in which the babe had been born, now doubtless some days, if not weeks, ago. **Frankincense and myrrh**—Both resinous gums obtained from trees found in Arabia, used for medicinal purposes and for embalming, and very expensive. **12. Another Way**—Possibly proceeding south from Bethlehem, past Hebron, and through Idumæa eastward, or to the northeast across Jordan, leaving Jerusalem to the west.

Application: Finding Jesus

I. A Personal Matter—With the shepherds: “let us now go even unto Bethlehem” (Luke 2. 15); With the wise men: “we have seen his star in the east, and are come to

worship him" (Matt. 2. 2); With Herod, "Go and search diligently . . . and bring me word again" (Matt. 2. 8) [note that in the case of Herod there was lacking sincerity of purpose, and hence his effort was a failure]; With Simeon, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" (Luke 2. 30); With strangers at Jerusalem, "we would see Jesus" (John 12. 21); With the apostles, "This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2. 32). II. *An Urgent and Vital Matter*—Let us go now (Luke 2. 15); "Now is the acceptable time" (2 Cor. 6. 2); "Seek ye Jehovah while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa. 55. 6); "Neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." (Acts 4. 12 comp. also John 4. 50; 7. 37). III *Possible to All*—"We have found him" (John 1. 45); "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matt. 7. 7); "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Rev. 3. 20; comp. Isa. 65. 1; Rom. 10. 20); "Search the Scriptures . . . ; they are they which testify of me" (John 5. 39).

For Further Discussion

Locate Bethlehem? Give more facts about it. What do you know of the Herods? For whom especially did Matthew write? Give as many different titles as you can which are given to Jesus in the new Testament. What threefold office does Jesus fill? How and in what sense does he now fill each of these three? How do men find Jesus to-day? What is meant by this finding? Have you found him? Give in order of their occurrence the intervening events between this lesson and the next.

LESSON XII.—December 22

SAMUEL THE UPRIGHT JUDGE.—1 Sam. 7. 1-13

Read 1 Sam. 5-7.

Memorize verses 12, 13.

1. And the men of Kiriath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of Jehovah, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of Jehovah. 2. And it came to pass, from the day that the ark abode in Kiriath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah. 3. And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto Jehovah with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. 4. Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served Jehovah only. 5. And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Jehovah. 6. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the

children of Israel in Mizpah. 7. And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. 8. And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto Jehovah our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. 9. And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering unto Jehovah: and Samuel cried unto Jehovah for Israel; and Jehovah answered him. 10. And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but Jehovah thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel. 11. And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines and smote them, until they came under Beth-car. 12. Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath Jehovah helped us. 13. So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the border of Israel: and the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Golden Text.—Direct your hearts unto Jehovah, and serve him only.—1 Sam. 7. 3.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Samuel the Upright Judge, 1 Sam. 7. 1-13. *T.* Samuel's integrity, 1 Sam. 12. 1-5. *W.* Intercession of Moses, Num. 14. 11-21. *Th.* Godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7. 1-11. *F.* Heart repentance, Joel 2. 12-19. *S.* Returning, Luke 15. 11-24. *S.* "Save, Lord!" Psa. 20.

Introduction: Samuel the Man

The name Samuel means literally *Name of God*. It is derived from the circumstances attending the birth of our hero. "And she called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of Jehovah" (1. 20). Samuel was fitted both by natural disposition and by early training at home and in the sanctuary at Shiloh for the important part he was called upon to play in a critical period of the national life of Israel. He may be regarded as at once the last of the old order of Judges, which had dated from the time of Joshua, and also as the forerunner of the new order of prophets, which in later Jewish history were to become such a potent factor in shaping the life and character of the nation. Like a second Moses, he devoted himself heroically and unselfishly to the service of the people whose guide and leader he was called to be. The prominent traits of his character were piety, patriotism, and magnanimity. His life motto was in harmony with his exhortation to his countrymen, "Turn not aside from following Jehovah, but serve Jehovah with all your hearts." At the end of his career he challenges the people to inspect his character and official life, and remonstrates with Israel

on their choosing a king to rule over them, declaring their choice to be an act of disloyalty against Jehovah. His farewell words to the people are words of earnest exhortation and warning not to forsake Jehovah or be unfaithful in their service to him.

Explanation: A Textual Study

1. Kiriath-jearim—Probably a village the site of which has not been definitely located, though the location suggested, about ten miles southwest of Jerusalem, is supported by very plausible arguments. **Fetched up the ark of Jehovah**—From Beth-shemesh, to which place the Philistines had recently returned it. **Abinadab**—A man of whom nothing further is known. **The hill**—Or, *Gibeah*. **Sanctified Eleazar**—Consecrated him by solemn anointing **to keep the ark**. Nothing is said of Abinadab's or Eleazar's belonging to the priesthood or tribe of Levi. **2. Israel lamented**—Or, *was drawn together*. **3. Ashtaroth**—The plural of Astarte, the goddess of the Canaanites. **4. Baalim**—Plural of Baal, the god of the Canaanites. **5. Mizpah**—A site some five miles north of Jerusalem has been suggested, though not definitely identified, as the location of ancient Mizpah. **6. Drew water, and poured it out before Jehovah**—A solemn rite indicating contrition of heart, not elsewhere mentioned in the Old Testament. **Judged the children of Israel**—Sat before them in judgment, hearing and adjusting complaints of various kinds. **7. Went up against Israel**—The Israelites were gathered for a religious service, and with no preparation for war. This afforded the Philistines an opportunity which they determined not to let pass. **Were afraid**—Because defenseless and unprepared for battle. **9. A whole burnt offering**—In Exod. 29, 38 and Lev. 23, 12 a lamb of the first year is enjoined as the regular burnt offering. **10. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering**—The most favorable moment for the attack. **Thuder**—Heb., *voice*. **Discomfited them**—Frightened and put them to flight. For similar instances of the revelation of Jehovah's presence to the people in thunder and lightning, compare 2 Sam. 22, 14; Isa. 66, 6. **11. Beth-car**—An unknown place, probably to the west of Mizpah, in which direction the Philistines would naturally retreat. **12. Between Mizpah and Shen**—The location of Shen also is unknown. **Eben-ezer**—Meaning, *the stone of help*. **13. Came no more within the border of Israel**—That is, not during all the days of Samuel.

Application: Mizpah—Eben-ezer

I. Mizpah—A Time of Revival.—1. A revival of religion does not come without human preparation. Some faithful few must pray and labor, often through months and years, to prepare the ground. Their longing for a revelation from God and for an outpouring of his Spirit upon the people must be so deep and so intense that it becomes contagious. 2. Such a time of revival often constitutes the best opportunity for the enemy

to attack. Many a failure as well as many a triumph in the Christian life and in the work of the church dates from a time just following a revival. 3. A genuine revival of religion prepares for conflict and for the achievement of larger success. Mizpah ever comes before Eben-ezer. II. *Eben-ezer—A Monument of Victory.*—It is well to set milestones on the hilltops of life's journey to mark the place and time of notable victories over self and sin. 1. A victory over superior forces. The triumphs of the church of God must ever be such. 2. A victory hardly anticipated. With fear and trembling Israel had awaited the conflict. A proper appreciation of one's own weakness is sometimes an essential element in a right preparation for achieving success. 3. A victory by the help of Jehovah. Such have been all the greatest victories of our lives.

For Further Discussion

What preparation on the part of the people and of Samuel preceded the meeting at Mizpah for prayer? Are confession of sin and humiliation of spirit, together with the adaptation of the mind to a better course in the future, on the part of a large company of God's people, essential elements in the preparation for a time of revival? What other elements are essential? The value of an occasional solemn review of the past with appropriate religious exercises.

LESSON XIII.—December 29.—Review

Read Psa. 98.

Golden Text.—Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.—Psa. 65. 11.

Home Readings (selected by the International Bible Reading Association).—*M.* Joshua, Israel's New Leader, Josh. 1. 1-11. *T.* Israel Enters the Land of Promise, Josh. 3. 5-17. *W.* Christmas Lesson, Matt. 2. 1-12. *Th.* Joshua Renewing the Covenant with Israel, Josh. 24. 14-28. *F.* Ruth's Wise Choice, Ruth. 1. 14-22. *S.* The Boy Samuel, 1 Sam. 3. 1-21. *S.* Samuel the Upright Judge, 1 Sam. 7. 1-13.

Introduction

If the Christmas lesson was used last Sunday, as was doubtless the case in most schools, then it would be well for senior classes to devote the lesson hour to-day to a consideration of the optional Old Testament lesson "Samuel, the Upright Judge," also given for Sunday, December 22, thus rounding out the Old Testament studies for the year. For the benefit of those who may desire either at home or during this hour to briefly review the lessons for the quarter we give the following general review summary. The Preview for the quarter, page 116, will form the best possible starting point for a consideration of the questions which follow.

General Review Summary

From what books are the lessons for this quarter taken? Concerning each of these books tell: 1. The significance of its name, that is, Why so named? 2. The general period which the narrative of the book covers. 3. Any data which you may have regarding the date and the authorship. What was the probable specific purpose of the Book of Ruth? What was the relation of the Books of Samuel to the Books of Kings? Give a brief character sketch of Caleb. Of Samson. Give a brief biographical sketch of Joshua. What light does the story of Samuel throw on religious conditions in Israel at that time? Name five nations or tribes inhabiting Palestine at the time of its conquest by Israel. Name and locate the Cities of Refuge. What was the significance of their establishment in the social and moral evolution of Israel? What lessons may we learn from the story of Gideon? What events of importance group themselves about Jericho? Name and locate three important places not previously mentioned in this review. Name the twelve tribes. Locate in a general way the territory of each.

The Golden Text

When we reflect to-day upon our experience during the days and months of the past year we are compelled to acknowledge the manifold mercies of Him who has guided our footsteps, and crowned our year with his goodness. Blessings of which we were not worthy have been our portion. Food, clothing, friendships, health—at least in greater measure than these same blessings have been vouchsafed to many others—opportunity and growth in grace and knowledge have been to us an inspiration and an incentive to truer and more noble living. Our crosses and afflictions have assisted us in discovering the real significance of life and that purpose of good which we may be sure was in these experiences also. And it may be that to us this year has come some supreme good that has seemed, at its close, to crown the year. For this supreme good, whatever it may be, and for the heavenly blessings of each separate day and hour, we should be thankful. Doubtless a thoughtful survey of the goodness and mercy of God toward us during the past year will constrain us to say with the psalmist “Many, O Jehovah my God, are the wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they are more than can be numbered” (Psa. 40. 5).

FIRST QUARTER

OPENING SERVICE

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. God be merciful unto us, and bless us.

SCHOOL. And cause his face to shine upon us.

SUPT. That thy way may be known upon earth,
thy saving health among all nations.

SCHOOL. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all
the people praise thee.

SUPT. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy;
for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon
the earth.

SCHOOL. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all
the people praise thee.

SUPT. Then shall the earth yield her increase;
and God, even our own God, shall
bless us.

ALL. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the
earth shall fear him.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE AND GOLDEN TEXT by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. ADDITIONAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Catechism may here be introduced.]

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with
majesty.

SCHOOL. The Lord is clothed with strength, where-
with he hath girded himself.

SUPT. The world also is stablished that it can-
not be moved.

SCHOOL. Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness
becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.

SECOND QUARTER

OPENING SERVICE

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

SCHOOL. Treasures of wickedness profit nothing: but righteousness delivereth from death.

SUPT. The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish: but he casteth away the substance of the wicked.

SCHOOL. He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

SUPT. He that walketh uprightly walketh surely: but he that perverteth his ways shall be known.

ALL. The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE AND GOLDEN TEXT by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. ADDITIONAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Catechism may here be introduced].

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel.

SCHOOL. Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

SUPT. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.

SCHOOL. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

THIRD QUARTER

OPENING SERVICE

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

SCHOOL. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

SUPT. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.

SCHOOL. Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.

SUPT. Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

ALL. Tht Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III, RECITATION OF THE TITLE AND GOLDEN TEXT by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. ADDITIONAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Catechism here may be introduced.]

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.

SCHOOL. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger forever.

SUPT. For as the heaven is high abcve the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

SCHOOL. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

FOURTH QUARTER

OPENING SERVICE

I. SILENCE.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

SCHOOL. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

SUPT. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

SCHOOL. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

ALL. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

III. SINGING.

IV. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, OR THE APOSTLES' CREED.

V. PRAYER, followed by the Lord's Prayer in concert.

VI. SINGING.

LESSON SERVICE

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE AND GOLDEN TEXT by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW AND APPLICATION OF THE LESSON by pastor or Superintendent.

V. ADDITIONAL LESSON. [Special lesson in the Catechism may here be introduced.]

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS [especially of the Church service and the Epworth League and week-evening prayer meetings].

CLOSING SERVICE

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

SCHOOL. For your heavenly father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

All. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The Ten Commandments.

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
 4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: for *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.
 5. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
 6. Thou shalt not kill.
 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 8. Thou shalt not steal.
 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that *is* thy neighbor's.
-

The Apostles' Creed.

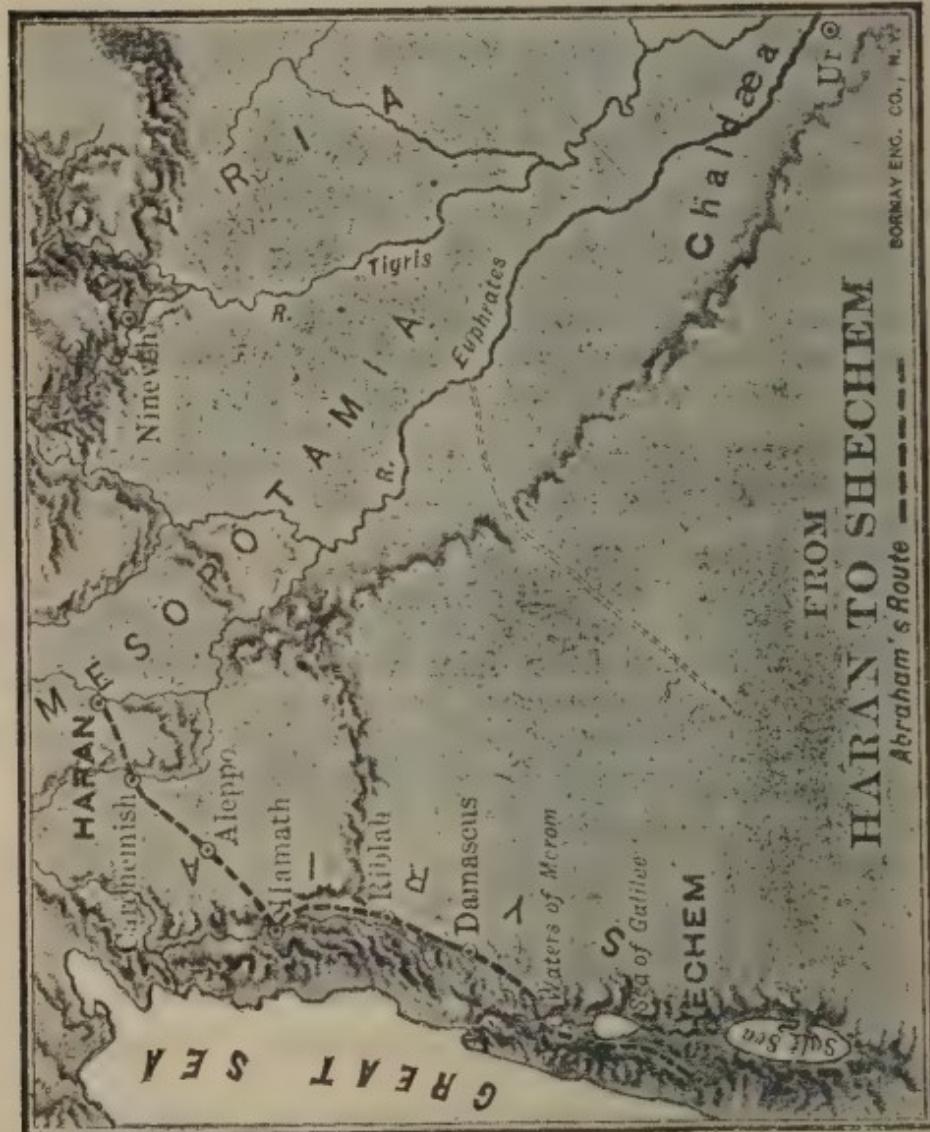
I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth:

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. men.

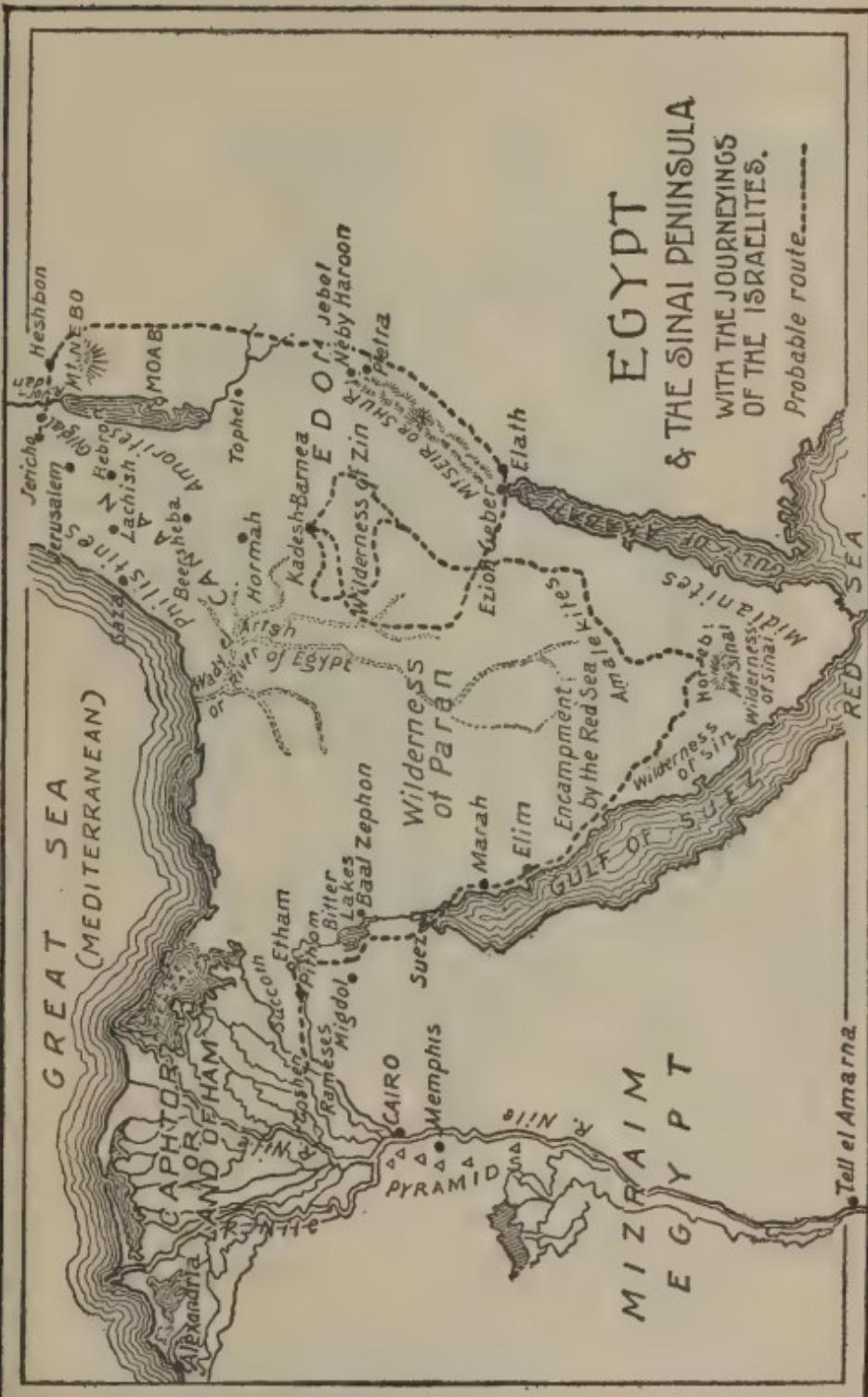
MAP ONE

TO ACCOMPANY LESSONS FOR THE FIRST
QUARTER, 1907



Illustrating the Journey of Abraham from Haran to Shechem
160

MAP TWO
TO ACCOMPANY LESSONS FOR THE SECOND
QUARTER, 1907

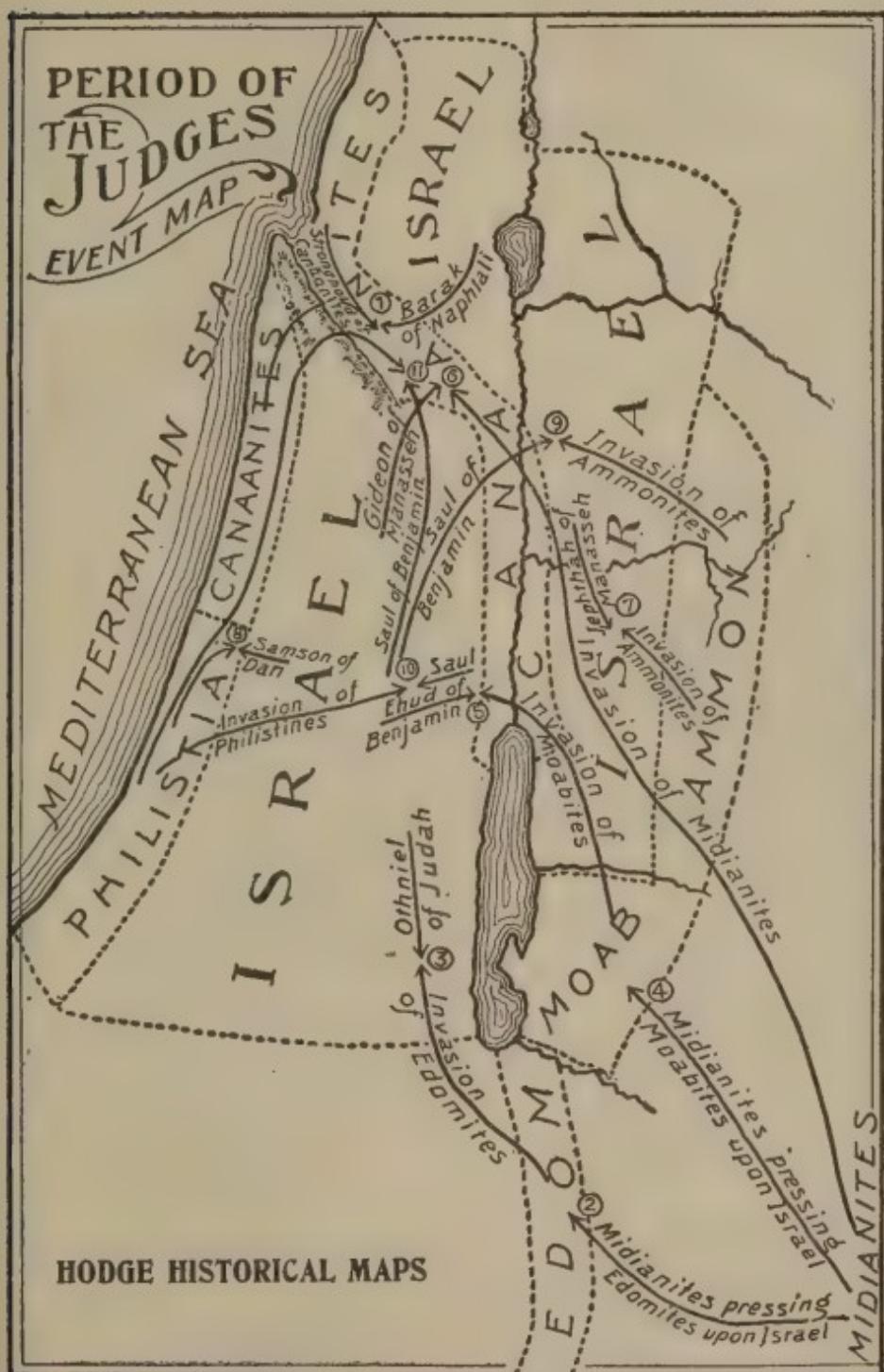


MAP THREE
TO ACCOMPANY LESSONS FOR THE THIRD
QUARTER, 1907



MAP FOUR

TO ACCOMPANY LESSONS FOR THE FOURTH
QUARTER, 1907



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